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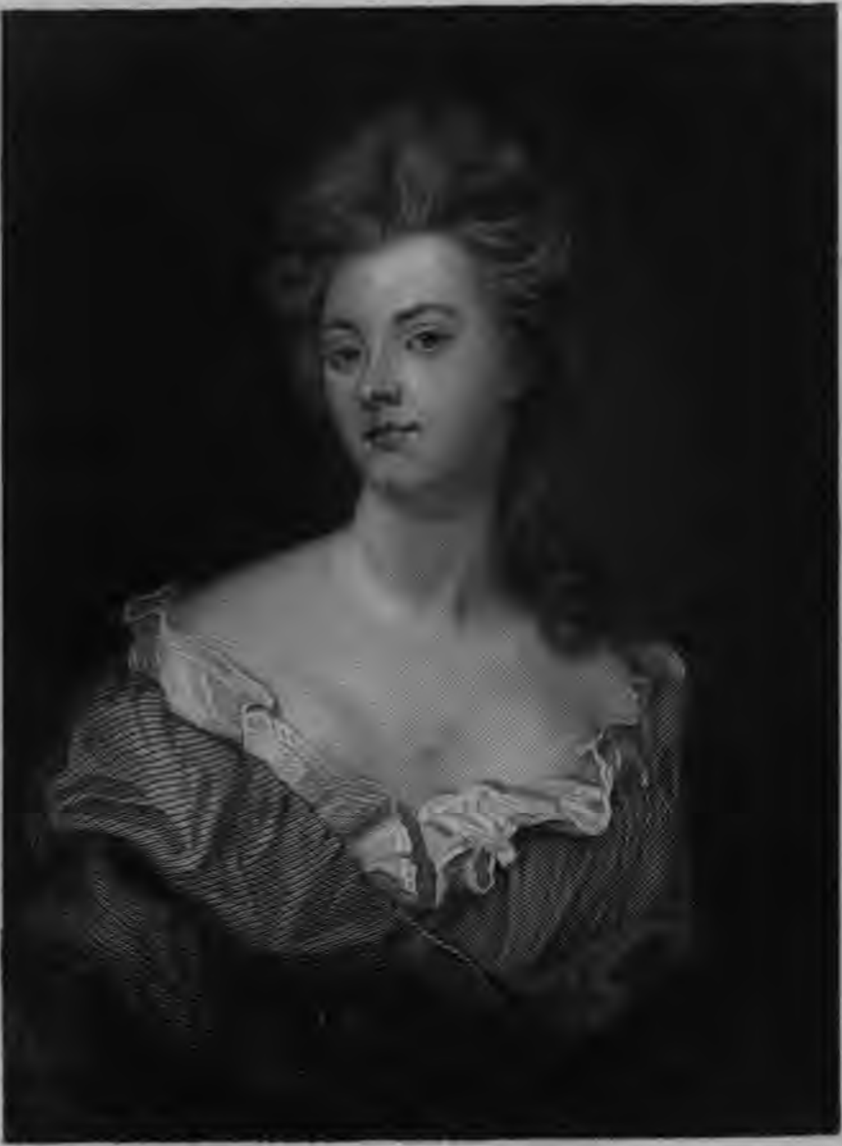

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SARAH,

Duchess of Marlborough.

MEMOIRS

OF

EMINENT ENGLISHWOMEN.

BY

LOUISA STUART COSTELLO,

AUTHOR OF

"SPECIMENS OF THE EARLY POETRY OF FRANCE," "A SUMMER AMONGST THE BOCAGES
AND THE VINES," "A PILGRIMAGE TO AUVERGNE," "THE QUEEN MOTHER,"
ETC. ETC. ETC.

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MEMOIRS

OF

EMINENT ENGLISHWOMEN.

SARAH, DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH.

SARAH JENNINGS, wife of the great captain and hero of the time of Queen Anne, was the most remarkable woman of her own, or perhaps of any, age: for a series of years, by her wisdom, spirit, promptness, and genius, her fearlessness and acuteness, she directed the affairs of state, and conduced to the prosperity of the kingdom, which she might, in fact, be said to govern, as she was assuredly more queen than the weak sovereign who sat on the throne, and who, as long as she depended on her illustrious favourite, was crowned, through her means, with fame and glory. Queen Anne is only another instance of the caprice and ingratitude of princes; for, after a life of obligation to that chosen friend of her youth, she cast her off for a contemptible parasite, merely to indulge her mean propensity for gossip and scandal, and thus escape the thraldom which good sense and judgment oppose to obstinacy and imbecility: careless of her kingdom's weal, and selfishly bent on her own childish gratification, which could be content to

> "Hide from the radiant sun, and solace
> I' the dungeon by a snuff."

The Duchess of Marlborough's family, though not noble, were of gentle lineage, and though her numerous enemies meanly endeavoured to throw contempt upon her birth, there is no doubt of the respectable position in which both her father and mother stood. Her grandfather, Sir John Jennings, received the order of the Bath at the same time as the Prince of Wales, afterwards Charles I., and his family were held in much esteem by the Stuarts. Her father was a country gentleman of good estate at Sandridge, in Hertfordshire, near St. Albans: her mother was Frances Thornhurst, daughter of Sir Gifford Thornhurst, of Agnes Court, in Kent, and his heiress.

Sarah,* the future political heroine of her age, (the "viceroy," as she was called,) was born on the 29th May, 1660, at Holywell, a suburb of St. Albans, in a small house not far from the spot where the Duke of Marlborough afterwards built a splendid seat. Of the five children of her parents she survived all except the Duchess of Tyrconnel, her sister. It was this sister whom she succeeded in the post of lady of honour to the Duchess of York, or rather she remained about the court as an attendant and playmate of the young Princess Anne, between whom and herself there sprung up an intimacy and friendship which lasted many years, and which, it is to be regretted, did not continue to the end.

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* See Mrs. Thomson's admirable Memoirs of the Duchess of Marlborough, which has furnished many particulars of this biography.

When John Churchill, afterwards Duke of Marlborough, was appointed gentleman of the bedchamber to the Duke of York, he was esteemed one of the handsomest, most attractive gentlemen of the day—amiable, interesting, and refined. He had entered the army at sixteen, and was already distinguished for his gallantry in the field at the time he became a member of the duke's household, when he had reached his twenty-fourth year. The famous Marshal Turenne had been attracted by his courage, and was in the habit of naming him the "handsome Englishman." The marshal is said to have laid a wager, which he won, on the subject of Churchill's gallantry, on the occasion of a station of importance having been abandoned by one of his own officers. "I will bet a supper and a dozen of claret," said he, "that my handsome Englishman will recover the post with half the number of men commanded by the officer who has lost it." The event justified the general's opinion. Lord Chesterfield, no mean judge, declared that the grace and fascination of manner of young Churchill was such that he was "irresistible either by man or woman."

That arbiter of elegance and good-breeding also adds, that so dignified was his deportment, that no one ever said a pert thing to him. But, at the same time, it is somewhat startling to learn, from this source, that this charming personage was "eminently illiterate, wrote very bad English, and spelt it worse; had no share in what is commonly called parts, had no brightness, and nothing shining in his genius."

This was by no means unlikely to be the case either in France or England at this period, when young men entered the army at almost a childish age, having been allowed no time for education, and elegance of manners amply supplying, in the opinion of the court, all more solid acquirements. It might have been supposed that a woman possessing such a superior mind as Sarah Jennings, would have, however, required in a suitor something more than mere external accomplishments; but she was, at the time they first met, very young, and probably her own education had been conducted upon a plan rather calculated for display than otherwise, although it is recorded that her mother bestowed great care on her early instruction. However this might be,

> "Beauty has such resistless power,"

that the young soldier, who in the dances and revels of the court was said so much to excel that "every step he took carried death with it," eclipsed in the heart of the youthful Sarah all other gallants, and for him she rejected "the star and ornament of the court," the admired Earl of Lindsay, afterwards Marquis of Ancaster.

But the lovers, though rich in beauty and affection, were poor in the world's goods, and their union held out little prospect which prudence should have induced them to seek.

The young Duchess of York, who was made the confidant of the attachment, stood their friend on this occasion, and offered her powerful assistance. Their engagement lasted three years, and its progress was not without those shades of vexation which usual attend on the "course of true love." The young lady, whose temper and disposition were always somewhat decided and imperious, was occasionally visited with fits of spleen and jealousy, and once had nearly broken off the connexion, on hearing that Churchill's parents desired that he should form a marriage with a richer rival. She wrote a severe letter to her lover, and entreated him "to renounce an attachment which militated against his worldly prospects;" and professed her intention to quit England and reside with the Countess of Hamilton, her sister, in Paris, and endeavour to forget that she had ever desired to be his wife. As is usual in these cases, where real regard exists, an outburst of this nature only cemented the attachment closer, and the lovers were reconciled, to become more resolved than ever to live for each other alone.

They were married in 1678, but in secret, none but the Duchess of York being privy to the fact. A letter is preserved from the Duke of Marlborough of this date, from Brussels, which he addressed to her as Miss Jennings, and on it she has herself written:

"I believe I was married when this was written, but it was not known to any but the duchess."

A few months afterwards, however, they avowed the truth; but their prospects of domestic happiness were, in consequence of the troubled state of the times, not likely to be good: frequent and necessary absences divided the young soldier from his bride, and she had only the consolation of receiving such letters as the following, which assured her of his constant affection:—

"Brussels, April 12.

"I writ to you from Antwerp, which I hope you have received before now, for I should be glad you should hear from me by every post. I met with some difficulties in my business with the Prince of Orange, so that I was forced to write to England, which will cause me to be two or three days longer abroad than I should have been. But because I would lose no time, I despatch all other things in the mean time, for I do, with all my heart and soul, long to be with you, you being dearer to me than my own life. On Sunday morning I shall leave this place, so that on Monday night I shall be at Breda, where the Prince and Princess of Orange are, and from hence you shall be sure to hear from me again; till then, my soul's soul, farewell."

After a period of some anxiety, occasioned by unavoidable separation, Mrs. Churchill and her husband, both attached to the service of the Duke and Duchess of York, accompanied the royal pair to the Hague and to Brussels. No great political events had at this time called forth the power of character which lay dormant in the bosom of the future directress of her Queen, the young princess, whose life glided on at this epoch with little to mark its importance. Colonel and Mrs. Churchill followed for some years the fortunes of the little less than exiled brother of Charles II., who, for a variety of reasons, he did not desire to see in England; but it was on the return of the Duchess of York, in 1681, to London, that Mrs. Churchill's first daughter was born, an event which is thus alluded to in a letter from her absent husband:—

"I writ to you last night by the express, and since that I have no good news to send you * * * the only comfort I had here was hearing from you; and now, if we should be stopped by contrary winds, and not hear from you, you may guess with what satisfaction I should pass my time: therefore, as you love me, you will pray for fair winds, that we may not stay here, nor be long at sea.

"I hope all the red spots of our child will be gone against I see her, and her nose strait: so that I may fancy it to be like the mother, for she has your coloured hair. I would have her to be like you in all things else."

The aspirations of Colonel, now Baron Churchill, of retiring with his wife from public life, and enjoying in retirement the domestic felicity which always seemed to be the object of his desire, were not destined to be realized, and, much to his vexation, he was compelled to continue in a career which his patron, the Duke of York, felt to be so necessary for his interests. What the wish of his young, beautiful, and ambitious wife might be at this juncture does not appear; for, with her sagacity, it does not seem unlikely that she foresaw the probability of her friend and companion, the Princess Anne, becoming hereafter the object of her country's hope; and, at any rate, of her holding a position in the kingdom which would enable her to advance those who had really served and been attached to her. Not that selfish motives in general actuated the mind of Lady Churchill: she was ambitious of her country's glory, and, it was likely, felt little inclination to desert a post from whence she could watch interests dear to her. Her friendship for the Princess Anne grew with their growth:

their confidences were mutual, their habits similar, and the superiority of the one was acknowledged with gratitude by the other, who was guided, assisted, and supported on every occasion, either trifling or of moment, by the acuteness and judgment of one who possessed her undivided regard.

No two young persons could, however, be more unlike each other than Lady Churchill and the Princess Anne: the latter, quiet, somewhat phlegmatic, easy and gentle, extremely well-bred, fond of ceremony, and averse to mental exertion; the former, resolute, bold, inclined to violence, prompt, unwearied and haughty, although she probably was, particularly at an early period, undeserving of the bitter censure bestowed on her by that most unjust and unamiable of all biographers, Swift, who describes her as the victim of "three furies which reigned in her breast, the most mortal of all softer passions, which were—sordid avarice, disdainful pride, ungovernable rage."

Her undaunted honesty and her passion for truth, though virtues to be commended, and which endeared her to her early friend, doubtless came, in after life, to be considered as vices, from being too undisguised to please the myriad sycophants and traitors about a throne; but in youth, when all is charming, and disappointment, misrepresentations, and vexations had not yet soured her spirit, and rendered these great qualities of less value, the princess felt security in her councils, and happiness in her society; for she could entirely trust her, whom she looked upon, with justice, as one of those friends worthy to be worn

> "In the heart's core, ay, in the heart of hearts."

"The beginning of the princess's favour to me," says the Duchess of Marlborough, "had a much earlier date than my entrance into her service. My promotion to this honour was chiefly owing to impressions she had before received to my advantage. We had used to play together when she was a child, and she had even then expressed a particular fondness for me. This inclination increased with our years. I was often at court, and the princess always distinguished me by the pleasure she took to honour me, preferably to others, with her conversation and confidence. In all her parties for amusement I was sure, by her choice, to be one; and so desirous she became of having me near her, that upon her marriage with the Prince George of Denmark, in 1683, it was at her own request that I was made one of the ladies of the bedchamber. * * *

"Her highness's court was so oddly composed, that I think it would be making myself no great compliment, if I should say her choosing to spend more of her time with me than with any other of her servants, did no discredit to her taste."

It must be remembered that, joined to her great abilities and manners, Lady Churchill possessed extreme beauty, which is generally an advantage in the eyes of royalty, for princes love to surround themselves with objects agreeable to the eye. Her complexion was faultless, her figure majestic, and the beauty of her hair quite exquisite: age and time had but little power over her, and to the latest period she preserved many of the charms which had so distinguished her in early years. Her powers of conversation were fascinating in the extreme, an accomplishment peculiarly prized by her royal friend, who was singularly deficient in that particular, and was glad to have recourse to her, to conceal her own defect. Bishop Burnet describes her as "a woman of little knowledge, but of a clear apprehension and a true judgment."

The unintellectual manner in which her time was spent at court seems not a little to have perturbed a spirit so exalted and so ready for active exertion as her own: as she must have excelled in all things she undertook, she was doubtless a consummate card-player, but it galled her to record that she "never read nor employed her time in anything but playing cards," although she adds, at the same time, that she had not then "any ambition."

A friend was what the princess professed to be the object she most courted, and she had found in Lady Churchill one fearless, honest, sincere, and affectionate: rather imperious, even then, it may be, but not to the extent she afterwards became; and though independent and uncompromising, the more valued, as unlike the fawning crowds who flattered and betrayed her.

“ Kings and princes, for the most part,” remarks the duchess, “ imagine they have a dignity peculiar to their birth and station, which ought to raise them above all connexions of friendship with an inferior. Their passion is to be admired and feared, to have subjects awfully obedient, and servants blindly obsequious to their pleasure.

“ Friendship is an offensive word: it imports a kind of equality between the parties: it suggests nothing to the mind of crowns or thrones, high titles or immense revenues, fountains of honour or fountains of riches, prerogatives which the possessors would always have uppermost in the thoughts of those who approach them. * * * The princess had a different taste. A friend was what she most coveted, and for the sake of friendship, (a relation which she did not disdain to have with me,) she was fond of that equality which she thought belonged to it. She grew uneasy to be treated by me with the form and ceremony due to her rank; nor could she bear from me the sound of words which implied in them distance and superiority. It was this turn of mind which made her one day propose to me, that whenever I should happen to be absent from her we might, in our letters, write ourselves by feigned names, such as would import nothing of distinction between us. MORLEY and FREEMAN* were the names her fancy hit upon, and she left me to choose by which of these I would be called. My frank, open temper, led me to pitch upon FREEMAN, so the princess took the other, and from this time Mrs. Morley and Mrs. Freeman began to converse together as equals, made so by affection and friendship."

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* See her letter to Bishop Burnet.

"I both obtained and held the place in her service," the duchess goes on to relate, "without the assistance of flattery—a charm which, in truth, her (the princess's) inclination for me, together with my unwearied application to serve and amuse her rendered needless; but which, had it been otherwise, my temper and turn of mind would never have suffered me to employ. Young as I was when I first became this high favourite, I laid it down as a maxim, that flattery was falsehood to my trust, and ingratitude to my dearest friend. * * * From this rule I never swerved: and though my temper and my notions in most things were widely different from those of the princess, yet, during a long course of years, she was so far from being displeased with me for openly speaking my sentiments, that she sometimes professed a desire, and even added her command, that it should be always continued, promising never to be offended at it, but to love me the better for my frankness."

The princess writes herself to her friend, in these words:—

"If you will not let me have the satisfaction of hearing from you again before I see you, let me beg of you not to call me 'your highness' at every word; but to be as free with me as one friend ought to be with another: and you can never give me a greater proof of your friendship than in telling me your mind freely in all things, which I do beg you to do; and if ever it were in my power to serve you, nobody would be more ready than myself. I am all impatience till Wednesday, till when farewell."

It is impossible not to admire the kind feeling displayed by the princess at this period, and to regret that the natural weakness of her mind overcame her good intentions, which, if carried out, would have made her as illustrious as events rendered her reign.

Lady Marlborough has been, as well as her husband, reproached for their desertion of James II. and his Queen; and the Princess Anne's conduct has been considered unnatural and cruel towards her father. Imperious circumstances, and the imprudent zeal in a cause detested by the nation, persevered in by the monarch, estranged his friends, and finally induced them entirely to yield to the expressed wish of the whole people of England; and it was left to the unfortunate son of Charles I. to exclaim, in the bitterness of his spirit, as he saw every friend drop off from him, and range themselves under the banner of his rival—"God help me; my own children have forsaken me!"

The flight of the Princess Anne from London, when her father returned to his capital, after vainly endeavouring to rally his troops round him, most assuredly did more credit to her prudence than her filial tenderness. Her excuse for deserting her father in his troubles was, that she felt compelled to follow the example and fortunes of her husband, who had gone over to the Prince of Orange, and was afraid to remain to offer her consolations, as she dreaded the reproaches which her parents might think she merited.

"God grant," she wrote to her step-mother, "a happy end to all these troubles, that the King's reign may be prosperous, and that I may shortly meet you again in peace and safety. Till then, let me beg of you to continue the same favourable opinion that you hitherto had of

"Yours, &c.
ANNE."

The flight of the princess from her apartments at the Cockpit, where she resided, is circumstantially told by Lady Churchill, who accompanied her, and placed her under the care of the Bishop of London, when they proceeded to Nottingham, and surrounded themselves with the friends of the Prince of Orange. The militant bishop, Dr. Compton, who had formerly been a dragoon-officer, and who was resolute in defence of the rights of the Protestant Church, rode before the princess and her suite, with a drawn sword in his hand, and pistols at his saddle-bow; and thus they joined the Earl of Devonshire, the friend of the murdered Lord Russell, and one of the chief promoters of the Revolution.

An amusing anecdote is told by Colley Cibber of the impression made on him by the sight of the beautiful Lady Churchill, at Chatsworth, where the earl conducted his guests. That splendid seat, which seems doomed never to be entirely finished, but which in all times appears to have been undergoing adornment, was, at the time the Princess Anne and her party arrived there, being altered "from a Gothic to a Grecian magnificence." Cibber, the famous sculptor, whose immortal carvings divide the palm with those of Gibbons, at the most splendid palace in England, was then busy in his calling, and covering the walls and ceilings with those wreaths which vie with nature; and his afterwards well-known son, Colley, happened to be then with him; for he had assumed the volunteer command, which his father was glad to relinquish in his favour. He thus became one of the party despatched to protect the princess on her way to Nottingham, and to escort her and her friends to

Chatsworth. The night of their arrival, all the noblemen and gentlemen who had taken up arms in her defence were admitted to sup at the table with the princess; but the guests were found to be so numerous, that more attendants were found necessary, and young Cibber was requested to take the post of waiting on Lady Churchill. Cibber was fifty years older when he recounts the adventure; but its impression had by no means faded from his mind:—

"Being," he says, "so near the table, you may naturally ask me what I might have heard to have passed in conversation at it, which I certainly should tell you, had I attended to above two words that were uttered there,—and those were, "*some wine and water.*" These, I remember, came distinguished to my ear, because they came from the fair guest whom I took such pleasure to wait on. Except at that single sound, all my senses were collected into my eyes, which, during the whole entertainment, wanted no better amusement than that of stealing, now and then, the delight of gazing on the fair object so near me. If so clear an emanation of beauty, such a commanding grace of aspect, struck me into a regard that had something softer than the most profound respect in it, I cannot see why I may not, without offence, remember it, since beauty, like the sun, must sometimes lose its power to choose, and shine with equal warmth upon the peasant and the courtier."

The directress and friend of the Princess Anne has not escaped blame for the part she took in recommending her to relinquish her claim to the crown in favour of her sister's husband, William of Orange; but it seems unreasonable to condemn her for a measure which appeared the only one likely to secure the peace of the country and the quiet of the princess. When it is remembered that Lady Churchill hesitated to offer advice on so important a subject till she had consulted with the high-minded widow of Lord Russell, and had received both hers and Archbishop Tillotson's opinion in favour of the resignation of the Princess Anne's claims, Lady Marlborough certainly ought to be exonerated from all suspicion or blame: she doubtless acted, as they did, for the best, and deserved gratitude, rather than hostility, for the part she took.

It was agreed that William and Mary should reign during their separate lives, but that Anne, or her children, should succeed after the death of both, in preference to any children which William might hereafter have by a second marriage, should he survive the Queen.

King William and Queen Mary were therefore declared sovereigns, and took possession of the regal state, which was laid down by King James and his "Queen of tears," as Mary of Modena has been called. Mrs. Thomson, in her excellent life of the Duchess of Marlborough, feelingly describes the departure of the latter from Whitehall, and the unfeeling conduct of her step-daughter Mary.

"Whatever," says the biographer, "was the nature of Mary's feelings, the cold and light deportment which she manifested on her entrance into her palace at Whitehall, the last refuge of her deposed and deserted father, gave considerable offence. Mary, it was thought, might have remembered, with compassion, the unfortunate, and, as far as grave offences were concerned, the innocent Queen, her step-mother, Mary of Modena, who had last inhabited the very apartments into which she was now herself conducted. She might have bestowed one passing serious thought upon that unhappy fugitive, who, only two months previously, had left that house privately, with her infant son, the Prince of Wales, then five months old, carried by his nurse; one faithful friend, the Count de Lauzun, the sole companion of her flight. From this palace she had crossed the Thames in the darkness of night, unsheltered, in an open boat, the wind, rain, and swell of the river conspiring to detain and terrify her, and to add to the gloom of her situation.

"On this palace, standing for shelter under the walls of an old church in Lambeth, had the wretched Queen fixed her eyes, streaming with tears, and searching, with fruitless tenderness, for the flitting shadow of her husband across the lighted window; whilst, starting at every sound which came from that direction, the desolate mother sometimes suspended her anxious gaze to look upon her sleeping infant,* unconscious of her miseries, unconscious of the hope deferred, the disappointment, the perplexities which awaited him in his future career as the penalty to be paid for royal birth."

The Duchess of Marlborough thus describes the conduct of Mary on her arrival at the palace:—

"I was one of those who had the honour to wait upon her to her own apartment. She ran about, looking into every closet and conveniency, and turning up the quilts upon the bed, as people do when they come into an inn, and with no other sort of concern in her appearance but such as they express: a behaviour which, though at that time I was extremely caressed by her, I thought very strange and unbecoming. For, whatever necessity there was for deposing King James, he was still her father, who had been so lately driven from that chamber and from that bed: and if she felt no tenderness, I thought she should at least have looked grave, or even pensively sad, at so melancholy a reverse of his fortune. But I kept these thoughts in my own breast, not imparting them even to my mistress, to whom I could say anything with all the freedom imaginable."

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* Dalrymple.

However caressing Queen Mary might have been to her sister's friend at the commencement of her reign, the kind feeling soon changed, and she began to regard the now Countess of Marlborough with jealousy and suspicion; so that her sojourn at the gloomy palace of Hampton Court, where the cynical William chose to seclude himself, must have been far from agreeable, either to her or the Princess Anne, between whom and her sister differences arose which rendered their intercourse anything but friendly.

On the Queen's first arrival, Lady Marlborough says that—

"The princess went to see her, and there was great appearance of kindness between them; but this quickly wore off, and a visible coldness ensued; which, I believe, was partly occasioned by the persuasion the King had, that the prince and princess had been of more use to him than they were ever likely to be again, and partly by the different characters and different humours of the two sisters. It was, indeed, impossible they should be very agreeable companions to each other, for Queen Mary grew weary of anybody who would not talk a great deal, and the princess was so silent, that she rarely spoke more than was necessary to answer a question."

Queen Mary had evidently taken an unfavourable impression of Lady Marlborough previous to her accession; and it was this idea which the Princess Anne was anxious to do away with by the following letter, dated, "Cockpit, Dec. 29, 1687;" which, it must be confessed, does honour to her friendship:—

"* * * Sorry people have taken such pains to give so ill a character of Lady Churchill * * * I believe there is nobody in the world has better notions of religion than she has. It is true, she is not so strict as some are, nor does not keep such a bustle with religion: which, I confess, I think is never the worse; for one sees so many saints mere devils, that, if one be a good Christian, the less show one makes it is the better in my opinion. Then, as for moral principles, it is impossible to have better; and, without that, all the lifting up of hands and eyes, and going often to church, will prove but a very lame devotion. One thing more I must say for her, which is, that she has a true sense of the doctrine of our Church, and abhors all the principles of the Church of Rome: so that, as to this particular, I assure you, she will never change. The same thing I will venture, now I am on this subject, to say for her lord; for though he is a very faithful servant to the King, and that King is very kind to him, and I believe he will always obey the King in all things that are consistent with religion; yet, rather than change that, I dare say he will lose all his places and all that he has."

Disputes, both on trifling and important matters, both respecting a change of apartments and a suitable allowance of income, were continually disturbing the peace of the royal sisters; and, whenever Anne showed any spirit or resolution, her doing so was attributed, probably not without cause, to the advice of the Countess of Marlborough. Every means was tried to induce the latter to give up her friend's interest; but, faithful and firm, and relying on the justice of the princess's demand for a provision worthy of her dignity, the countess resolved to support her in her determination to insist on her claims being allowed. The country took the part of the princess; and it was well known that King William's liberality was not to be depended on respecting her, for he wished always to keep her dependant and in his power.

A grant to the princess of fifty thousand pounds a-year was at length settled, through the medium of Lady Marlborough, whose firmness and whose influence King William became soon aware were not to be resisted. The success of the affair was, as she relates, justly attributable—

"To the steadiness and diligence of my Lord Marlborough and me; and to this it was imputed, both by those to whom the result was so exceedingly disagreeable, and by her to whose happiness it was then so necessary."

The Princess Anne, anxious to show her gratitude as well as affection to the zealous and persevering friends through whose means an annuity of such magnitude had been obtained for her, resolved to settle on Lady Marlborough a pension of a thousand pounds, and accompanied the gift with the following amiable note, which, like many others at this period, shows extreme delicacy as well as attachment.

"I have had something to say to you a great while, and I did not know how to go about it. I have designed, ever since my revenue was settled, to desire you would accept of a thousand pounds a-year. I beg you will only look upon it as an earnest of my good will, but never mention anything of it to me: for I shall be ashamed to have any notice taken of such a thing from one that deserves more than I shall ever be able to return."

Before, however, the disinterested favourite could decide on the propriety of accepting this sum, she consulted with her husband's, the princess's, and her own sincere and judicious friend, Lord Godolphin; who, considering it as entirely her due, she consented to receive this proof of her royal mistress's regard.

On no occasion would Lady Marlborough consent to advise the Princess Anne to anything against her honour and her interest, though she was repeatedly urged to do so by Queen Mary; and, most assuredly, if a true friend ever existed, Lady Marlborough was one to her, who confided in and looked up to her in every action of her life.

Lord Marlborough at this time was sent on a campaign to Ireland, and from thence his letters to his wife breathe the most tender attachment, as as they always did to the end of his career, for he was one of the most affectionate and amiable of men, delighting in and sighing after domestic enjoyment, for which he would willingly have resigned all his glory. To romp with his children, probably, afforded him much higher gratification than to find himself surrounded by his staff, admired and lauded.

"You cannot imagine," he writes to his wife from Tunbridge, "how I am pleased with the children: for they, having nobody but their maid, are so fond of me, that when I am at home they will always be with me, kissing and hugging me.

"Miss is pulling me by the arm, that she may write to her dear mamma: so that I shall say no more, only beg that you will love me always as well as I love you, and then we cannot but be happy."

To this is added, as if by his little daughter:—

"I kiss your hands, my dear mamma.

"HARRIET."

The high-minded Marlborough, conscious that all the advice he gave, as well as the actions he performed, were for the good of his country, was not aware how dangerous truth may be to him who utters it; and, like his undaunted wife, he seldom hesitated to say what he thought: on one occasion he ventured to express to King William,—

"That though he had himself no reason to complain, yet many of his good subjects were sorry to see his royal munificence confined to one or two foreign lords."

The King took offence at this frankness, and from that moment sought occasion to disgrace the earl: an opportunity soon occurred, in the continued quarrels between the sisters Mary and Anne, and the petty revelations made by the Viscountess Fitzharding to the Queen, of letters and conversations which had passed between Lady Marlborough and the princess, ridiculing King William, and naming him in the most ludicrous and indecorous manner. To the surprise of Lord Marlborough, without the slightest warning, he one day found himself deprived of all his appointments, and forbidden the court; doubtless, as the duchess observes, his disgrace being merely a step towards removing her from the princess. This step was, indeed, the next taken, and several very sharp and severe letters passed between the sisters, on the occasion of the countess's dismissal from court, which was not effected without a struggle on all sides, and the order was only obeyed by the princess herself quitting the court, and retiring, with her beloved and insulted friend, to Sion House, the mansion of the Duke of Somerset, who lent it for the princess's residence, and whose firmness in resisting the desire of King William, that he should revoke his promise of putting it at Anne's disposal, gained for both him and his duchess, Elizabeth Percy, the esteem of the Princess, which was afterwards shown to the detriment of the Duchess of Marlborough herself, so unstable is the favour of princes!

The injustice and petulance of the King and Queen having thus led them to overwhelm with disgrace two persons so little likely to be patient under injuries as the Earl and Countess of Marlborough, the conferences held by them with the Princess Anne were not calculated to excite to endurance. The long-dormant tenderness of Anne to her exiled father was awakened by the sense of her sister's unkindness, and her dislike to her brother-in-law. Lord Marlborough professed to have believed, as many did, that when William came to England as Prince of Orange, he was expected merely to adjust differences, and not to assume the reins of government himself: he felt, therefore, at liberty to use his influence to restore the old branch; and having always kept up, through his wife's sister, the Duchess of Tyrconnel, a communication with the deposed King, it was not difficult nor unpleasing to him to renew former terms. Marlborough and his wife have been reproached with treachery for their conduct in this instance, nor can they be considered blameless, for they abandoned one cause as lightly as the other, influenced by their own resentments: though in both cases the interests of their friend, the Princess Anne, was the paramount object of their wishes, there appears but little doubt.

But for the resolute conduct of Queen Mary, on the discovery of an extensive plot, England would once more have been a scene of civil discord and bloodshed.

The Duchess of Marlborough, however, in her own accounts, affects to treat its existence as a fable. She thus names it :—

"Soon after the princess's going to Sion, a dreadful plot broke out, which was said to be hid somewhere, I don't know where, in a flower-pot, and my Lord Marlborough was sent to the Tower."

This was a time to prove the friendship of Lord Marlborough's allies; and some stood boldly forth, while others of his nearest blood shrunk back, appalled at the false accusations made against him; but none was more vehement in expressions of regard, and in real attachment, than the Princess Anne, who writes to the countess, on the report that Marlborough's arrest was to be followed by that of herself and the Prince of Denmark :—

"I am just told, by pretty good hands, that as soon as the wind turns westerly, there will be a guard set upon the prince and me. If you hear there is any such thing designed, and that 'tis easy to you, pray let me see you before the wind changes; for afterward one does not know whether they will let one have opportunities of speaking to one another. But let them do what they please, nothing shall ever vex me, so long as I can have the satisfaction of seeing dear Mrs. Freeman;

and I swear I would live on bread and water, between four walls, with her without repining: for, as long as you continue kind, nothing can ever be a real mortification to your faithful Mrs. Morley, who wishes she may never enjoy a moment's happiness in this world, or in the next, if ever she proves false to you."

The earl was at length released from his ignominious confinement, and his enemies put to silence, by the confession of an infamous witness that he had spoken falsely, and forged the earl's signature and seal. The countess was, however, deeply irritated, not without reason; for those who envied, and were resolved to ruin her, were many and powerful; amongst them not the least bitter, and by far the most dangerous, was the celebrated Dean Swift, who, in all that relates to his conduct towards the duchess, proved himself the same unmanly character as he did in his transactions with the two unfortunate women whom attachment to one so unworthy destroyed.

He encouraged and supported an infamous female, named Mrs. Manly, to attack the countess, in an abusive book called "The Atalantes;" and scruples not, in his "Remarks of the Four last Years of Queen Anne's reign," to reiterate the mean scandal which he probably at first propagated.

The Princess Anne meantime underwent, from her sister, a series of the most unkind persecutions, in order to induce her to give up her favourite. Queen Mary treated her with every indignity and harshness in consequence of her refusal to do so; and even went so far as to visit her, after a confinement in which her infant was still-born, and reproach the almost fainting invalid with her obstinacy. Lady Marlborough, wearied out by the pertinacity of her enemies, at length proposed to the princess to quit her service, as the only chance of restoring harmony, but, she says—

"When I said anything that looked that way, the princess fell into the greatest passion of tenderness and weeping that is possible to imagine; and," she adds, "though my situation at that time was so disagreeable to my temper, that, could I have known how long it was to last, I could have chosen to have gone to the Indies sooner than to endure it; yet, had I been to suffer a thousand deaths, I think I ought to have submitted rather than have gone from her against her will."

The princess, unable, in her weak state, to support the unkindness of the Queen, or the thought of losing her friend, was attacked with a fever, which caused some alarm; but Queen Mary was not to be softened, and still insisted on the favourite being dismissed.

Anne, terrified that her friend would at length yield, addressed the most moving letters to her, in which such sentences occur as these:—"Only death shall part me from my dear Mrs. Freeman:" "it would break your faithful Mrs. Morley's heart," &c. The countess, wishing to know the sentiments of Prince George of Denmark on the subject of her quitting the service of the princess, the latter wrote to assure her that it would give him equal pain with herself.

"In obedience," she writes, "to my dear Mrs. Freeman, I have told the prince all she desired me; and he is so far from being of that opinion, that, if there had been any occasion, he would have strengthened me in my resolutions; and we both beg you would never mention so cruel a thing any more. * * * Can you think either of us so wretched, as, for the sake of twenty thousand pounds, and to be tormented from morning to night with flattering knaves and fools, we should forsake those we have such obligations to. * * * No, my dear Mrs. Freeman, never believe your faithful Morley will ever submit. She can wait with patience for a sunshiny day, and if she does not see it, yet she hopes England will flourish again. Once more give me leave to beg you would be so kind never to speak of parting more; for, let what will happen, that is the only thing that can make me miserable."

Every sort of petty wrong that Queen Mary could heap on her sister was resorted to, in consequence of her refusing to do an injustice: the two courts were opposed to each other; no person who ventured to visit the princess being well received by the Queen, and marked slights being shown her, which were resented rather by the Countess of Marlborough than their object, till Berkeley House, where Anne resided, became a continual scene of bickering and vexation. Her only comfort, and the only bond of union which existed between the sisters, was the infant son of the Princess of Denmark, the sole survivor of six children. This child was regarded with equal interest by each party, and excited the strongest hopes and expectations: the manner in which, however, the Queen's inquiries after the child's health were carried on, were so offensive, that the Duchess of Marlborough observes:—

"I have often wondered how any mortal could bear it with patience. For whoever was sent used to come, without any ceremony, into the room where the princess was, and, passing by her, as she stood or sat, without taking more notice of her than if she had been a rocker, go directly up to the duke, and make their speech to him or to the nurse, as he lay in her lap."

Queen Mary, to the deep affliction of her husband, died; but to the last appears to have preserved her animosity to her sister, whom she refused to see, the pretext given being that she was ordered to be kept quiet. Queen Mary is generally represented as an amiable and pious woman; but her harsh conduct to her sister and to her father makes it rather problematical whether she was either. She was carried off by the small-pox, and left King William inconsolable for her loss; for to him she was a most attached and devoted wife. There was no difficulty in reconciling him to the Princess Anne after the Queen's decease, and Anne was invited to make St. James's Palace her residence in future.

"And now," says the duchess, "it being publicly known that the quarrel was made up, nothing was to be seen but crowds of people, of all sorts, flocking to Berkeley House to pay their respects to the prince and princess: a sudden alteration which, I remember, occasioned the half-witted Lord Carmarthen to say one night to the princess, as he stood close by her in the circle—'*I hope your highness will remember that I came to wait upon you when none of this company did,*' which caused a great deal of mirth."

Notwithstanding this apparent reconciliation, King William did not discontinue the affronts which his late Queen had showered upon her sister, and they were so many, that the indignant and haughty duchess, who would not have borne a tithe of such, exclaims:—

"I believe I could fill as many sheets as I have already written, with relating the brutalities that were done to the prince and princess in this reign. The King was indeed so ill-natured, and so little polished by education, that neither in great things nor in small, had he the manners of a gentleman."

King William, however, was, from policy, induced to appoint the Earl of Marlborough as chief preceptor of the young heir-apparent, the Duke of Gloucester; and this act, which was performed graciously, softened in the earl's mind some of the affronts he had suffered before: but his wife never speaks otherwise than bitterly and severely of the meanness which William showed in the arrangement of the young prince's household.

Conjointly with his military governor, Burnet, then Bishop of Salisbury, an intimate friend of Lady Marlborough, was appointed to share the duties of his office: this excellent and pious man, being a friend of this celebrated woman, perhaps speaks more in her favour than all the abuse she received could against her character.

The promising young prince, who had now become the hope of the whole nation, at the age of eleven years, prematurely learned, and too much excited by the ceremonies and etiquette which surrounded him, the last of a numerous family which had been all cut off in infancy, died of a malignant fever, the day after his birthday, July 24th, 1700.

And now, on the Princess Anne the nation alone could look for the successor of her sister's husband, with the family of Hanover in perspective, for the unfortunate "Pretenders" were excluded by their religion.

The next death that occurred, slowly bringing Anne nearer to her hereditary honours, was that of King William, two years after the prince had expired, thus leaving the throne vacant scarcely so much for Queen Anne as for her at length triumphant favourite, for whose sake she had sacrificed all ties of kindred, and embroiled herself with all the world.

The Countess of Marlborough's originally lively temper, and bold, dauntless mind, had by degrees taken a severer and more violent bias, as frequently recurring disappointments, mortifications, and vexations had proved to her how little dependance was to be placed, either on the promises of fortune, or the professions of friends. Soured by reverses, and unconsoled for treachery and insult by the generous attatchment of her mistress, she had become violent, overbearing, and vindictive: her frankness was degenerating into rudeness, her honesty into insolence: she had adopted a habit of "never thinking herself in the wrong, or caring what was thought of her by others."

At the time Queen Anne assumed the reins of empire, the countess was in the very height of her glory: she knew her own value, and that of her gallant and successful husband; she was fully aware of the easy and somewhat weak character of the Queen; and as she followed her Majesty to the House of Lords, two days after the death of King William, she looked round with gratified pride, and secretly resolved that every one she gazed on should be subject to her sway. Hitherto she had only ruled in trifles, for there had always been some power above her which controlled her will; but now she felt, indeed, that the game was in her own hands, and she might in future command where she had been forced to yield. She knew that Anne not only loved, but feared her. She knew that she would require her aid, would have recourse to her on all occasions of difficulty, and she felt equal to every emergency in which her genius might avail her. It was difficult for human nature to stand against the seductions of such power as was within her grasp, and the proud and exulting countess was unequal to the struggle. From that hour the worst parts of her character became developed, and the high-minded and disinterested favourite, faithful to a persecuted mistress, and bold in her defence, was transformed into a selfish and ambitious tyrant.

From the very beginning of Queen Anne's reign, a difference in politics between her and her friend was manifested. Lady Marlborough had a strong leaning to the Whig side, while the Queen was always attached to the Tory party, and thus dissensions at once arose respecting the ministers, and the attendants who were to surround the throne; the countess wishing to introduce her friends, and the opposite faction countenanced by the Queen. Lady Marlborough, however, disclaims any bias in her politics, proclaiming, in her celebrated "Defence," the disinterestedness and patriotism of her views.

"As to private interest," she says, "the Whigs could have done nothing for my advantage more than the Tories. I needed not the assistance of either to ingratiate me with the Queen; she had, both before and since her accession, given the most unquestionable proofs that she considered me, not only as a most faithful servant, but as a dear friend.

"It is plain, therefore, that I could have no motive of private interest to bias me in favour of the Whigs: every body must see that, had I consulted that oracle about the choice of a party, it would certainly have directed me to go with them to the stream of my mistress's inclination and prejudice. This would have been the surest way to secure my favour with her."

About a year after Anne became Queen, she evidently began to feel the weight of her friend's opposition, and to find the yoke a burthen, when she thus writes in humble strain:—

"Your poor, unfortunate, faithful Morley would not have you differ in opinion with her in the least thing, and, upon my word, my dear Mrs. Freeman, you are mightily mistaken in your notion of a Tory. For the character you give of them does not belong to them, but to the Church. But I will say no more on this subject, but only beg, for my poor sake, that you would not show more countenance to those you seem to have so much more inclination for than the Church party."

With the usual inconsistency of weak minds, Anne, who had formerly abandoned her father, and disowned her brother, had of late years, induced not by remorse or conviction, but by the ill-treatment she received from her sister, indulged in sympathy for the exiled family, and made friends with those who espoused their cause. Lady Marlborough, whose mind was not so readily biassed by events, and who had always been guided by the desire of serving the true interests of her mistress, was naturally irritated by the vacillating conduct of the Queen, and annoyed when she found that it was settling at last into a decided partiality for the relatives whom she had so long disregarded.

"When I saw," she observes, "she had such a partiality to those that I knew to be Jacobites, I asked her one day whether she had a mind to give up the crown; for if it had been her conscience not to wear it, I do solemnly protest I would not have disturbed her, or struggled as I did. But she told me she was not sure the Prince of Wales was her brother, and that it was not practicable for him to come here without ruin to the religion and the country."

The Earl of Marlborough, meantime, had little reason to rejoice in the triumphs of his wife, for he too felt that power did not improve her, and devotedly attached to her as he was, his peace was greatly shaken by her violence and political interference. He and his fast friend, that excellent and upright man, Lord Godolphin, endeavoured altogether to soothe and soften her excited feelings, but in vain; and the home, that once was so happy to Marlborough, was now disturbed and gloomy. The hitherto unbroken friendship of the Queen and "Queen Sarah," as the countess was now popularly called, was by degrees sensibly diminishing; disputes and reconciliations occurred too often, and the harmony that once united Mrs. Morley and

Mrs. Freeman was at an end. Lord Marlborough, as well as his friend, took the part, as their duty dictated, of the Queen, and wrangling consequently ensued on all sides, which distressed and pained the tender heart of the earl to the utmost. When compelled to leave her, to assume the command, on the declaration of war with Holland, his grief and regret almost overcame him, and the greatest general of his time would, even then, have willingly resigned his fame, and the glory which the future held out to him, to retire with his beloved wife to a country retreat, where politics nor ambition should never vex them more: but this could not be; he was obliged to depart, and Lady Marlborough, equally attached to him, but firmer and more resolute in self-denial, and of a less tender nature, accompanied him to Margate, where he was detained several days by contrary winds. When the moment of sailing arrived, his agitation was extreme, and he hurried on board to conceal his feelings. The following letter was written to her he so much loved soon after:—

"It is impossible to express with what a heavy heart I parted with you when I was at the water-side. I could have given my life to have come back, though I knew my own weakness so much that I durst not, for I should have exposed myself to the company. I did, for a great while, with a perspective glass, look upon the cliffs, in hopes I might have had one sight of you; we are not out of sight of Margate, and I have neither soul nor spirits; but I do at this moment suffer so much, that nothing but being with you can recompense it.

"If you will be sensible of what I now feel, you will endeavour ever to be easy to me, and then I shall be most happy; for it is only you that can give me true content. I pray God to make you and your's happy; and if I could contribute anything to it, with the utmost hazard of my life, I should be glad to do it." * * *

Again he writes, in allusion to some of the political quarrels of the day:—

"I do assure you, I had much rather the whole world should go wrong than you should be uneasy, for the quiet of my life depends only on your kindness. I beg you to believe that you are dearer to me than all things in the world. My temper will make you and myself sometimes uneasy; but when I am alone, and I find you kind, if you knew the true quiet I have in my mind, you would then be convinced of my being entirely yours, and that it is in no other power in this world to make me happy but yourself."

"July 17, 1702. From the Meuse.

"We have now very hot weather, which I hope will ripen the fruit at St. Albans. When you are there, pray think how happy I should be walking alone with you. No ambition can make me amends for being from you. If it were not impertinent, I should desire you, in every letter, to give my humble duty to the Queen; for I do serve her in heart and soul.

"I am on horseback, or answering letters, all day long; for, besides the business of the army, I have letters from the Hague, and all places where her Majesty has any ministers; so that, if it were not for my zeal for her service, I should certainly desert; for you know, of all things, I do not love writing. * * *

"I am very impatient for the arrival of Devrell, you having given me hopes of a long letter by him; for, though we differ sometimes in our opinion, I have nothing here that gives me so much pleasure as your letters; and believe me, my dearest soul, that, if I had all the applause and even the whole world given me, I could not be happy if I had not your esteem and love."

"Dangers and difficulties," observes Mrs. Thomson, in her Memoirs, "perplexed the hero, even amid his most brilliant successes. The campaign of the Meuse had been concluded, Liege taken, and Marlborough was preparing to return to England, when an accident occurred which had nearly closed for ever the splendid career of him on whom the fortunes of England depended. In descending the Meuse from Maestricht, in order to go to the Hague, the boat in which he sailed was separated, in the night, from its companion, manned with sixty men, and Marlborough was left with a guard of twenty-five men only. A French vessel from Gueldres was lurking among the reeds and sedge on the river, as Marlborough's small party became apparent. The adverse party immediately rushed on the boat, and overpowered the guards.

"In this situation the coolness of Marlborough, and his perfect command of countenance, saved him from discovery. The Dutch deputies on board were furnished with French passports, but Marlborough disdained to solicit one from these functionaries. A man standing near him thrust into his hand a pass which he drew out of his pocket. It happened to be a French passport which had been formerly given to General Churchill, Lord Marlborough's brother, who had quitted the service from ill health. Although aware that it was out of date, and that the slightest inspection might detect the imposition, Marlborough composedly presented it. He was in consequence permitted to proceed, while his escort were detained.

"To the man who saved his life he gave a pension of fifty pounds. Marlborough reached the Hague in safety; where rejoicings of the greatest enthusiasm, upon his escape, gratified the kind heart which was touched by the homely tribute of the lower orders."

Meantime much political intrigue was going on at home; and the countess has been accused, probably undeservedly, of selling pensions and places. Either her character must have strangely altered, or she who, when poor and out of power, rejected the generous offers of her mistress, could never have condescended to acts of such meanness and dishonour. Certain however it is, that an order in council was issued by the Queen, against the selling of places in her household and family.

Lord Marlborough's return, after his successful campaign, was hailed with great rejoicing, and the thanks of the House of Commons were offered him for his great services. The Queen resolved to reward him as highly as possible, and expressed herself in these words:—

"I am so satisfied of the eminent services of my Lord of Marlborough to the public and myself, both in the command of the army and in the entire confidence he has settled between me and the States General, that I intend to make him a duke."

Strange as it may seem, the dignity conferred on her husband did not seem desired by Lady Marlborough; and much caution, and even entreaty, was used by her friend, Lord Godolphin, and the Queen herself, in announcing it to her. When he sent her the address of the House of Lords, the former thus wrote:—

"I am apt to think Mrs. Morley may have something to say to you upon the subject, *which perhaps you may not like;* but I think it should be *endured* upon such an occasion, when it is visible to the whole world that it is not on your account."

This was followed by a humble letter from the sovereign to her imperious subject.

"St. James's, 22^{d}. Oct^{r}.

"I have had this evening the satisfaction of my dear Mrs. Freeman's of yesterday; for which I give you many thanks; and, though I think it a long time since I saw you, I do not desire you to come one minute sooner to town than it is easy for you, but will wait with patience for the happy hour; and only beg, when you do come, you would send for a coach, and not make use of a chaise.

"Lord Treasurer intends to send you a copy of the address of the House of Lords, which is to be given me to-morrow; and that gives me an opportunity of mentioning a thing which I did not intend to do yet. It is very uneasy to your poor unfortunate faithful Morley to think that she has so very little in her power to show you how sensible I am of all Lord Marlborough's kindness, especially when he deserved all that a rich crown could give; but, since there is nothing else at this time, *I hope you will give me leave*, as soon as he comes, to make him a duke.

"I know my dear Mrs. Freeman does not care for anything of that kind; nor am I satisfied with it, because it does not enough express the value I have for Mr. Freeman, nor ever can how passionately I am your's, my dear Mrs. Freeman."

"Ambition," says the duchess, "had no share in procuring that new title." And we are bound to credit her assertions; for, in a letter to a friend, she remarks:—

"I believe there are very few in the world who do not think me very much pleased with the increase of honour the Queen gave Lord Marlborough, when he commanded the army, at her coming to the crown: and perhaps it is so ridiculous, at least what few people will believe, that I would not mention it but to those that I could show the original letters to. If there be any truth in a mortal, it was so uneasy to me, that, when I read the letter first upon it, I let it drop out of my hand, and was for some minutes like one that had received news of the death of one of their dear friends; I was so sorry for anything of that kind, having before all that was of any use.

"I fear you will think what I say upon the subject is affected; and therefore I must repeat again, that it is more uneasy to me for a time than can easily be believed. I do think there is no advantage but in going in at a door; and, when a rule is settled, I like as well to follow five hundred as one."

It would seem by this that it was the precedence which the proud duchess was obliged to give to that *one* which made her dignity distasteful to her. She goes on to say:—

"The title of duke, in a family where there are many sons, is often a great burthen; though at that time I had myself but one, I might have had more, and the next generation a great many. To conclude, a higher title was not my feat; and, if I saw you, I could convince you of it."

Never was there "such a coil" to induce a subject to accept deserved honours; and certainly, though Lord Marlborough was less averse than his wife, the latter accepted the compliment paid by the Queen and the nation in a manner sufficiently ungracious.

"I give you many thanks," writes the Lord Treasurer, who might have added:—

'Why this is not a boon.
'Tis as I should entreat you wear your gloves ——
Or sue to you to do a peculiar profit
To your own person ———'

for the favour of your letter, which I received this evening. I did easily believe Mrs. Morley's letter would make you uneasy; but having her commands not to speak of it, I durst not say any more than just to prepare you to submit to what I found by her she was convinced was necessary for the satisfaction of the public. I have waited upon her this evening to let her see how truly uneasy you were, and have begged of her, when she sees you, not to part till she has made you easy again, either by your submitting to please her, or by her condescending to cure your apprehensions."

The duke seems much more grateful on the occasion, when he thus writes from the Hague:—

"You know I am very ill at compliments, but I have a heart full of gratitude, therefore pray say all you can to the Queen for her extraordinary goodness to me. As you have let me have your thoughts as to the dukedom, you shall have mine in short, since I shall have the happiness of being with you soon."

The reason assigned for the expressed reluctance to accept the dukedom was, that his fortune was unequal to support so exalted a rank; but this was overruled, as was to be expected, by an application from the Queen to the Commons, calling upon them to confer upon him a pension of five thousand pounds, to continue during her life. Perhaps the duchess had foreseen the opposition which was sure to arise from her enemies, should any large grant of money accompany the title which was to reward Marlborough's services, and this might have been the true cause of her aversion to its being bestowed. Already had profitable employments been amply conferred on different members of the duke's family, and by many he was considered as well paid. The grant was, in fact, refused, to the inexpressible mortification of those whom it most concerned; but so resolved was the Queen that her design should be accomplished, that she instantly intimated her intention of bestowing from her private allowance the sum which had been refused her.

Nothing can be more amiable and noble than the letter she writes on the occasion; it is as follows:—

"I cannot be satisfied with myself without doing something towards making up what has been so maliciously hindered in the Parliament, and therefore I desire my dear Mrs. Freeman and Mr. Freeman would be so kind as to accept of two thousand pounds a-year out of the privy purse beside the grant of the five—this can draw no envy, for nobody need know it. Not that I would disown what I give to people that deserve, especially where it is impossible to reward the deserts; but you may keep it as a secret or not, as you please. I beg my dear Mrs. Freeman would never any way give me an answer to this; only comply with the desires of your poor, unfortunate, faithful Morley, that loves you most tenderly, and is, with the sincerest passion imaginable,

"Yours."

This generous offer was most honourably declined by the Duke of Marlborough, who is usually called covetous, but who, in this instance at least, cannot be accused of any such vice. He never forgave the Tories for opposing his claims, but he would not take advantage of the liberality of the Queen.*

"He was overjoyed," he said, in thanking the Parliament for their expressed approbation of his services, "that the House thought he had done service to the public; but he would hereafter endeavour, as it had always been his wish, that he might be more indebted to his country than his country to him."

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* Mrs. Thomson's Memoirs.

From this time a constant warfare was kept up between the friends and opponents of the duke; his wife's mortification and disappointment irritated her temper past concealment, and she seems now to have given way to all the violence of her nature. It was greatly called forth by a fresh enemy, who eventually worked her downfal; this was Harley, afterwards Earl of Oxford, the leader of a new political party strongly opposed to the reigning favourite. He is thus characterised by Lord Cowper:*

"His humour was never to deal clearly, nor openly, but always with reserve, if not dissimulation, or rather simulation, and to love tricks even where not necessary, but from an inward satisfaction he took in applauding his own cunning. If any man was ever under the necessity of being a knave, he was."

But while party cabal was running at the highest, and the duchess was engaged in a thousand disputes, a great affliction overtook her in the death of her son, Lord Blandford, at the age of seventeen, of that then fatal disorder, the small-pox. He was a youth of remarkable promise, and beloved by all who knew him. When he was first attacked at Cambridge, the duchess was summoned, and hastened down to him in all the terror of an anxious mother; the Queen participated in her feelings, and sent two of her physicians in one of the royal carriages to attend him, and wrote and felt in the most affectionate manner the danger of the interesting young man.

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* Diary.

But friends, physicians, hopes, skill, and fears, were alike unavailing; and on the 20th of February, 1714, the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough had the inexpressible misfortune of losing their son.

This sad event made the most melancholy impression on both parents, and renewed the Queen's grief for the loss of her last and equally promising child.

No domestic sorrows could, however, soften the bitterness of party spirit; and, though the people at large felt for the bereaved parents, their misfortune did not seem to inspire their political foes with any remorse. Innumerable pamphlets were published, loading them with abuse; scribblers of the lowest degree were hired and paid to vilify and misrepresent them; and abusive writers, from Dean Swift to the infamous Mrs. Manly, whom he employed, exerted their utmost malice to blacken the character of the great general and his imperious duchess. It is not surprising that the impatient nature of the latter could not endure such attacks, and excuses for her anger and intemperance are not wanting, particularly when she observed that these injuries had their effect on the mind of her to whose interests she had devoted her life; and when she saw plainly that her insidious foe, Harley, was undermining her by degrees in the Queen's favour, which he afterwards effectually managed to do.

Meantime, the daughters of the duchess were grown up, and she had already married her beautiful Henrietta to Lord Rialton, the eldest son of Lord Godolphin, a match naturally to be expected, as the respective parents had always been such attached friends. This daughter afterwards inherited the title of Duchess of Marlborough, and unfortunately, in after years, incurred the enmity of her mother, with whose temper her own was too similar for them to agree.

Anne, the second, and called by Walpole "the most beautiful of all Lady Churchill's four charming daughters," was married to Lord Spencer, the son of the Countess of Sunderland, whose romantic friendship for Lady Marlborough, returned by her, occasionally excited the jealousy of the Princess Anne.

Elizabeth, the third daughter, became that Countess, afterwards Duchess, of Bridgewater, whom Pope delighted to praise, and attempted to paint: she seems to have been a model of beauty and gentleness, and, like her sister, Lady Sunderland, died at an early age, to the deep grief of their affectionate father, who never recovered their loss. The epitaph of the Duchess of Bridgewater, in Little Gaddeston Church, Hertfordshire, describes her quaintly, as—

"A lady of exquisite fineness both of mind and body: agreeably tall; of a delicate shape and beautiful mien; of a most obliging and winning carriage; sweetness, modesty, and affability were met together; whatsoever is virtuous, decent, and praiseworthy she made the rule of all her actions; her discourse was cheerful, lively, and ingenuous; pleasing, without ever saying too much or too little; so that her virtue appeared with the greatest advantage and lustre: her address was as became her quality, great without pride; admired and unenvied by her equals, and none condescended with greater grace and satisfaction to her inferiors.

"Happy her lord in such a wife; happy her children in such a mother; happy her servants that duly attended upon her. Being arrived at the highest pitch of worldly felicity, in full enjoyment of tenderest love and esteem of her entirely beloved husband, universally admired and spoken of for every good quality."

There remained another beautiful daughter, Mary, whom Pope calls the "Angel Duchess Montagu," as she afterwards became.

These lovely creatures obtained, through their mother's influence, so many posts about the Queen, that the court of Anne was said to be composed of a single family.

The "youngest, most beloved of all," was sought in marriage by some of the most attractive young noblemen of the day, and successively rejected Lord Mordaunt, son of the eccentric Lord Peterborough, and Lord Huntingdon. "There was not," says the historian of the Duke of Marlborough, "in England a more acceptable sacrifice to be offered up for appeasing the rage of parties." And her father, before setting out on his latest campaign,—

> "Fearing lest Whigs and Tories should combine together to ruin him, recommended to his wife to propose a marriage for her to the Earl of Montague's son, as a means of their reconciliation, and the establishment of his own power."

When the match was proposed for the young Lady Mary with John Montague, Viscount Monthermer, she shrunk from it; for it appears she had already made her election, "having set her eyes and heart upon another young gentleman, a very handsome youth."

An interval was allowed her to decide upon obeying her parents' wishes with a good grace, through the sad calamity which overwhelmed the family with affliction, namely, the death of the Marquis of Blandford, her brother; but, after the outward mourning for his loss had ceased, no more pause was allowed, and she became the wife of the nobleman who had been chosen for her: perhaps the dissensions, afterwards too notorious, between her and her mother might have owed their origin to this severity.

The Duke of Marlborough's health was, about this period, such as to cause some uneasiness to his friends; he complained of frequently recurring headaches, which greatly distressed him; and his necessary exertions, mental and bodily, left him but little leisure to attend in a proper manner to maladies which afterwards assumed a serious character. It is sad to read the letters he writes to his wife, mentioning his sufferings, yet making as light of them as possible:—

"When I last writ to you, I was so much disordered, that I writ in very great pain. I cannot say I am yet well, for my head aches violently, and I am afraid you will think me light-headed, when I tell you, that I go to-morrow to the siege of Limburg, in hopes to recover my health. But it is certainly true that I shall have more quiet there than I have here: for I have been these last six days in a perpetual dispute, and there I shall have nobody but such as will willingly obey me."

The marriage of Lady Mary Churchill to the Duke of Montague's son was intended to propitiate* the favour both of Whigs and Tories, by adding connexions amongst each of those parties to the interest of the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough. Never was there a period in which party spirit manifested itself with greater virulence than at the present juncture; and the contentions in Parliament were so vehement, that a dreadful storm seemed impending over the country. The popularity of the Whigs was increased, and strong suspicions were entertained that even the Queen's inclinations began to be favourable to that party:—

"But what was matter of hope to the Whigs," says Cunningham, "seemed to the Tories to be only a dangerous tempest ready to break upon the Church; and the furious clergy began to prophesy and report about the country great dangers of—the Lord knows what! So that it was now easy to perceive what influence there is in England in the mere cry of religion."

The influence of the duchess, in spite of all opposition, was now at such a height, that she was looked upon by foreign nations as of more importance than the Queen herself: no opportunity was lost of showing her honour and attention, and she could not but feel that nothing was wanting but the crown itself to make her Queen.

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* Mrs. Thomson.

At this time the newly-proclaimed King of Spain, Charles of Austria, visited England, after having been at all the German courts, where he was seeking a consort. About Christmas he arrived, and was accompanied by the Duke of Marlborough to Windsor, where he was received by the Queen with great courtesy and honour. He dined with the Queen in public; and it became quite a *furor* to see the accomplished stranger, particularly amongst the ladies, with whose beauty he was, in his turn, delighted. That of the Duchess of Marlborough and her daughters, of course, shone preeminently; and he was too good a courtier to neglect to offer the homage he knew would be most acceptable, at the proper shrine.

The duchess's office was to hold to the Queen, after dinner, the basin and ewer for her royal hands: the gallant young monarch took the basin from the duchess, entreating to be allowed to offer it himself to the Queen. When he returned the basin to the magnificent attendant of her Majesty, he placed a valuable ring on the duchess's finger with the utmost gallantry and grace.

All the nobility gave *fêtes* to the young monarch, but none were so splendid as those of the Duke of Marlborough, whom he twice honoured with a visit. He seemed fully impressed with the dignity of the duchess; and afterwards, in sending a letter to the Queen, thanking her for assistance to him against the French, he addressed them to the Duchess of Marlborough, as "the person most agreeable to her Majesty."

The tone of correspondence between the Queen and her favourite begins at length to tell a tale of change: the spirit of party had had its effect: disputes as to the propriety of the nonconformity-bill ran high, and opposition divided family against family. When the measure was carried, contrary to the notions both of Bishop Burnet, the energetic champion of the Whigs, and the duchess, the Queen writes to the latter thus:—

"I must own to you that I never cared to mention anything on this subject to you, because I knew you would not be of my mind; but since you have given me this occasion, I can't forbear saying, that I see *nothing like persecution in this bill.* * * * I am in hopes to have one look of you before you go to St. Albans, and therefore will say no more now, but will answer your letter more at large some other time, and only promise my dear Mrs. Freeman faithfully I will read the *book* she sent me, and never let difference of opinion hinder us from living together *as we used to do.* Nothing shall ever alter your poor, unfortunate, faithful Morley, who will live and die with all truth and tenderness, yours."

The humility of the Queen is still perceptible in her letters; though it is evident she was struggling against an influence she was urged by others to emancipate herself from.

"I am sure," she writes, "nobody shall endeavour more to promote union than your poor, unfortunate, faithful Morley, *who doth not at all doubt of your truth and sincerity to her*, and hopes her not agreeing *in every thing you say* will not be imputed to want of value, esteem, or tender kindness for my dear Mrs. Freeman, it being impossible for anybody to be more sincerely another's than I am yours.

"I am very sorry you should forbear writing upon the apprehension of your letters being troublesome; since you know very well they are not, nor ever can be so, but the contrary to your poor, unfortunate, faithful Morley. Upon what my dear Mrs. Freeman says, again, concerning the Address, I have looked it over again, and cannot for my life see one can put any other interpretation upon that word *pressures* than what I have done already. As to my saying the Church was in some danger in the late reign, I cannot alter my opinion; for though there was no violent thing done, everybody that will speak impartially must own that everything was leaning to the Whigs, *and whenever that is, I shall think the Church beginning to be in danger.*"

But, in the meantime, while home dissensions made the great general unhappy in the midst of his glorious endeavours for his country's sake, the achievement of the glorious battle of Blenheim covered his name with honour, and silenced for awhile the malignity of his enemies, who were labouring for his and his wife's downfal: the duchess contemptuously alludes to the state of party and the great event thus:—

"The Church was in a deplorable condition, it must be confessed; but it happened that my Lord Marlborough, in the summer before the Parliament met, gained the battle of Blenheim. This was an *unfortunate accident:* and by the visible dissatisfaction of some people on the news of it, one would have imagined that, instead of beating the French, he had beaten the Church."

Though it would appear that the duke and duchess, when he went on his late campaign, had parted on somewhat bad terms, from the different views they took on political questions, and the angry feelings they both indulged in, yet, as they were in reality warmly attached to each other, when she heard of his health and life being exposed to severe danger, while she remained in security at home, the repentant wife wrote to entreat him, with many affectionate professions, to allow of her joining him, and sharing his perils. This seems to have penetrated the heart of her husband with grateful fondness, and he writes to her the following letter, filled with the expression of his tenderness and satisfaction:—

"Hague, April 24 (May 5).

"Your letter of the 15th came to me but this minute. My Lord Treasurer's letter, in which it was enclosed, by some mistake was sent to Amsterdam. I would not, for anything in my power, it had been lost: for it is so very kind, that I would in return lose a thousand lives, if I had them, to make you happy. Before I sat down to write this letter, I took yours that you wrote at Harwich, out of my strong box, and have burnt* it; but if you will give me leave, it will be a great pleasure to me to have it in my power to read this dear, dear letter often, and that it may be found in my strong box when I am dead. I do this minute love you better than I ever did in my life before: this letter of yours has made me so happy, that I do from my soul wish we could retire and not be blamed. What you propose as to coming over, I should be extremely pleased with: for your letter has so transported me, that I think you would be happier in being here than where you are: although I should not be able to see you often. But you will see, by my last letter, as well as this, that what you desire is impossible; for I am going up into Germany, where it would be impossible for you to follow me; but love me as you do now, and no hurt can follow me. You have by this kindness preserved my quiet, and I believe my life; for till I had that letter, I have been very indifferent of what should become of myself. I have pressed this business of carrying an army into Germany, in order to leave a good name behind me; wishing for nothing else but good success. I shall now add that of having a long life, that I may be happy with you."

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* The duchess insisted on her letters not being preserved.

When she urged him a second time to allow her to join him, he answers:—

"I take it extremely kind that you persist in desiring to come to me; but I am sure, when you consider that three days hence will be a month, and that we shall be a fortnight longer before we shall get to the Danube, so that you could hardly get to me, and back again to Holland, before it would be time to return to England. Besides, my dear soul, how could I be at ease? for if we should not have good success, I could not put you in any place where you would be safe."

The battle of Blenheim lasted five hours, and the duke had been sixteen hours on horseback, and was still in pursuit of the enemy when he tore a leaf from his pocket-book,* and with a pencil wrote to her on whom his thoughts were bent, even in the midst of danger and difficulty. How precious a document is this hurried announcement of the important victory!

"August 13, 1704.

"I have not time to say more but to beg you will give my duty to the Queen, and let her know that her army has had a glorious victory. M. Tallard and the other generals are in my coach, and I am following the rest.

"The bearer, my aide-de-camp, will give her an account of what has passed. I shall do it in a day or two by another, more at large.

"MARLBOROUGH."

Colonel Parker was the aide-de-camp who brought this announcement to the duchess, and was instantly despatched with it to the Queen. It was usual to give the messenger of such important intelligence a present of five hundred pounds, but the colonel requested, instead, to be allowed to have her Majesty's picture. The Queen granted the permission, and presented him with her miniature. The colonel, highly gratified, had his own portrait painted by Kneller, wearing this precious miniature, and holding the despatch in his hand, with the battle of Blenheim represented in the back ground.

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* This precious note was written on the back of a commissary's bill, containing a list of tavern expenses, and an entry of bread furnished to the troops. It is preserved in the archives of Blenheim. A beautiful group in silver, representing the duke in the act of writing this famous despatch on a drum-head, has recently been executed for the present Duke of Marlborough, by Mr. Cotterill, in his usual fine taste.

The return of the duke was the occasion of a series of triumphs; and the year 1705 was ushered in by solemn processions, banquets, and entertainments in honour of the victories which had blessed the armies of the Queen. The pride of the duchess must have been for the time gratified, for of course she was the great heroine on the occasion, and was loaded with honours and praises, as her husband's adviser, and the partner of all his glories.

"On the third of January,* the trophies reaped at the battle of Blenheim were removed from their first place of deposit, the Tower, to Westminster Hall. Companies of horse and foot-guards led the way: persons of rank were intermixed with the troops, and a hundred and twenty-eight pikemen, each bearing a standard, closed the triumphal procession. The Queen viewed the whole from the windows of the Lord Fitzharding's lodgings in the palace, attended by her favourite, who heard, in the triumphant acclamations of the excited multitude, signals of destruction, ominous not only to foreign foes, but presaging the downfal of the political party opposed to her at home.

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* Mrs. Thomson. Lediard. Coxe.

"A grand entertainment in the city, at Goldsmiths' Hall, succeeded this interesting display. Marlborough was conveyed to the banquet in one of the royal carriages, and gazed upon with curiosity and enthusiasm by the multitude. At Temple-bar he was received by the city marshals, with the usual ceremonies."

With unanimous consent the royal manors of Woodstock and Wootton were bestowed on the duke, and the illustrious name of Blenheim given to the domain. Then rose that stately pile which, heavy though it be, and severely criticised as it has been since the period of its erection, is nevertheless a splendid memorial of a nation's gratitude; and though Sir John Vanbrugh, the architect, and the duchess quarrelled as much over the building as critics have done with him on the subject, Blenheim can never cease, from its magnitude and magnificence, to excite admiration in the general mind.

That Swift should ridicule anything connected with the Duke of Marlborough is not surprising: had the work been faultless, he would, of course, have brought his satiric ill-nature to bear upon it: the very doubt he throws upon the great general in his lines, is enough to do away with the point of his sneer:—

> "And if his grace were no more skill'd in
> The art of battering walls than building,
> We might expect to see next year
> A mousetrap man chief engineer."

Walpole, equally sarcastic and equally prejudiced, says of Sir John Vanbrugh:—

"He seems to have hollowed quarries rather than have built houses; and should his edifices, as they seem formed to do, outlast all record, what architecture will posterity think was that of their ancestors? The laughers, his cotemporaries, said, that having been confined in the Bastile, he had drawn his notions of building from that fortified dungeon. That a single man should have been capricious, should have wanted taste, is not extraordinary. That he should have been selected to raise a palace, at the public expense, for the hero of his country, surprises one. Whose thought it was to load every avenue to that palace with inscriptions, I do not know: altogether they form an edition of the acts of parliament in stone."

Regarding Blenheim, and the duchess's disputes with that extravagant and unprincipled architect, Sir John Vanbrugh, it is impossible not to see that the latter was to blame. This is her plain statement, in a letter to Mr. Hutchinson:—

"Upon the subject of Blenheim, which every friend I have knows I was always against building at such expense, and as long as I meddled with it at all, I took as much pains to lessen the charge, every way, as if it had been to be paid for out of the fortune that was to provide for my own children: for I always thought it too great a sum* even for the Queen to pay; and nothing made it tolerably easy to me, but my knowing that, as she *never did a generous thing of herself*, if that expense had not been recommended by the Parliament, and paid out of the civil list, *she would have done nothing with the money that was better.*

"But I never liked any building so much for the show and vanity of it, as for its usefulness and convenience, and therefore I was always against the whole design of it as too big and unwieldy: whether I considered the pleasure of living in it, or the good of my family that were to enjoy it hereafter; besides that the greatness of the work made it longer in finishing, and consequently would hinder Lord Marlborough from enjoying it when it was reasonable to lose no time. And I made Mr. Vanbrugh my enemy by the constant disputes I had with him to prevent his extravagance, which I did effectually in many instances, notwithstanding all the follies and waste which, in spite of all that could be said, he has certainly committed."

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* After two hundred and twenty thousand pounds had been received from the Treasury, to build Blenheim, sixty thousand pounds more were charged by Sir John Vanbrugh.

The battle of Blenheim was of such importance to England, that no one ventured to dispute it any more than any dared to name it in France.

"The power of France," says the duchess, "was broken by it to a great degree, and the liberties and peace of Europe were in a fair way to be established on firm and lasting foundations."

The duchess was now at the very height of triumph: all gave way before her, and her power over the Queen was greater than ever. Harley, whose efforts to circumvent her were then unavailing, did all in his power to conciliate her, but could not succeed. She despised his "diverting stories of the town"—afterwards eagerly listened to by the Queen, when a new favourite encouraged her weak fondness for gossip and scandal, and, in spite of all his assiduities, she had a decided aversion to him.

The duchess's dislike, amongst other causes, was occasioned by her wish to promote her son-in-law, Lord Sunderland, into posts which Harley endeavoured to keep for his own friends; and as the Queen was inclined to favour Harley more than she approved, heartburnings and vexations were continually springing up, which not even the successes of the duke could soften. The duchess writes to the Queen tartly and angrily, and the Queen complains of her unkindness. From this time their correspondence assumes a less affectionate character, and reproaches pass between them, showing how their love was beginning " to wither and decay."

" By the letter," says the duchess, " I had from your Majesty this morning, and the great weight you put upon the difference betwixt the word *notion* and *nation* in my letter, I am only made sensible (as by *many other things*) that you were in a great disposition to complain of me, since to this moment I cannot for my life see any essential difference betwixt those two words as to the sense of my letter; the true meaning of which was, only to let your Majesty know, with that faithfulness and concern which I ever had for your service, that it was not possible for you to carry on your government much longer with so much partiality to one sort of men, though they lose no occasion of disserving you and of showing the *greatest inveteracy* against my Lord Marlborough and my Lord Treasurer; and so much discouragement to others, who, even after great disobligations, have taken several occasions to show their firmness to your Majesty's interest, and their zeal to support you."

It is to be regretted, for the happiness of the duchess, that her warm temper would not admit of her treating calmly any attack made on herself and her husband, and could not turn away with contempt alone from scurrilous abuse, which so frequently assailed them both.

The duke writes to his friend Lord Godolphin, on occasion of a pamphlet appearing against him, thus: it had reached him while in camp, again engaged in his country's service, on the Ische:—

"In this camp I have had time to read the pamphlet called 'The Memorial of the Church of England.' I think it the most impudent and scurrilous thing I ever read. If the author can be found, I do not doubt but he will be punished; for if such liberties may be taken, of writing scandalous lies without being punished, no government can stand long. Notwithstanding what I have said, I cannot forbear laughing when I think they would have you and I pass for fanatics, and the Duke of Buckingham and Lord Jersey for pillars of the Church; the one being a Roman Catholic in King James's reign, and the other would have been a Quaker, or any other religion that would have pleased the late King."

To the duchess he merely writes, on this occasion, when she was deeply irritated:—

"Tirlemont, Sep. 7.

"I received last night a letter from you without date, by which I see there is another scurrilous pamphlet come out. The best way of putting an end to that villany is not to appear concerned. The best of men and women, in all ages, have been ill-used. If we can be so happy as to behave ourselves so as to have no reason to reproach ourselves, we may then despise what rage and faction do."

The amiable character of the duke shines out upon every occasion, and it is impossible not to regret that his domestic virtues had not as fair a field for display as his military genius.

Amongst the pamphlets of the day is one which may serve as a specimen of the rest. Few had more wit, though some indulged less harmless abuse.

"THE PETTICOAT PLOTTERS, OR THE D——SS OF M——H'S CLUB.*

"A set of female politicians of the Outed party, greatly exasperated at their husbands' misfortunes, (many of which had for their principles been turn'd out of their places,) resolv'd to assemble themselves into a weekly meeting; where they might give a loose to their provok'd tongues, and find an opportunity to reak their spleen upon the adverse party, whom they resolv'd not to spare, out of the abundance of their righteous spirits.

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* From a collection of pamphlets, proclamations, &c. in the British Museum .... $816.\,\frac{\text{m. }3}{151}$

Anglia. 1684—1792.}
Vol. iii. 177—337. }

"They resolv'd likewise to distinguish themselves by some remarkable name that might deserve notice, and get them reputation, and therefore, after several titles had been mentioned, it was at last very aptly resolv'd, by one of the assembly, to call themselves the D——ss of M——h's club; who being the chief sufferer in the cause they had form'd themselves to assume, was the fittest of all others to be chose their patroness, which was very much applauded by all the society; and though they did not expect that her G——e would honour them with her presence, yet this is certain, they knew she would not be wanting to countenance their proceedings.

"This being their first meeting, they began to lay their griefs open to one another. One said, that whilst her husband was in place, she had the liberty of the court, and was caress'd by the great ones there of both sexes, and visited by all people; but that now she found her visiting-day visibly declined, scarce the fifth part of the company appearing as usual, and those with an indifferent air from what they formerly did: nor did this only afflict her, but her daughter who should have been married to my young Lord ——, had been deserted by him, because her father had lost his power and interest at court, and that she must now take up with a less title, and become only a Baronets.

" As this was the dismal effect of her malady, another seconded her, and said, that indeed, since the late changes that her husband had resign'd his place, she had not only lost many of her visitants, but had been forc'd to dismiss some of her servants, and had now been forc'd to put away her woman, and was oblig'd to be dress'd by her chamber-maid; that she had but one footman behind her coach when she went abroad, whereas she never went without two or three before; and that she was fain to go into Hyde-park with a pair of horses only, which was a great mortification to her.

" The next began her complaint with saying, that her husband, since his being turned out of place, had shrunk her pin-money from five to two hundred pounds a-year, which would totally disable her now to keep the bank at Basset. Besides, he had been so covetous since, that he had returned a sett of silver and ivory on the goldsmith's hands, that he had bespoke for her; with many other noteable grievances.

" A fourth said, that she had ran the hazard of being mew'd up next winter at her husband's seat, for he had already disbanded his coach, and kept only the chariot; and talk'd of living in the country to save portions for his younger children, and that he had nearly cut off the profits of his place, which was 1,000*l.* a-year, out of the ordinary expenses of his family.

"Several complaints of this nature were aggravated among them, after which they toasted their patronesses' health, the D——ss, the L——ds G——n, S——d, W——n, and others of the disbanded party. On the other hand, they began to reak their vengeance on the new favourites. One, they said, had made an advance from the dressing-box to the coronet; another became a C——ss from her father's shop of small-wares. And after abundance of tart jests thrown on their adverse acquaintance, they agreed to meet every Saturday night, and resolv'd to have her G——'s picture painted on a chair of state, and fix'd at the upper end of the room. Their liquor is to be sack, and oranges, and their discourse to scandalise and rail at all in places."*

The extreme affection of the duke to his wife is shown in every expression he makes use of: he never ceased to write to her in the midst of the most agitating and important occupations, and repeatedly assures her that he has no hope of happiness or enjoyment but in rejoining her.

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* London, printed for T. Welland, near Holbourn. 1712.

" You make excuses," he tenderly says, " for your letter being long, I beg you to believe that if I had much more business than I have, I should leave it with pleasure to read your letters, and if I am ever uneasy, it is when I turn the leaf and find no more writing.

" Believe it, my dear soul, I can have no lasting happiness but with you.

" I am obliged to you for your kind expressions concerning Woodstock: it is certainly a pleasure to me when I hear the work goes on, for there it is I must be happy with you. The greatest pleasure I have, when I am alone, is the thinking of this, and flattering myself that we may then so live as neither to anger God nor men, if the latter be reasonable; but, if they are otherwise, I shall not much care if you are pleased, and that I do my duty to God; for ambition and business is what, after this war, shall be abandoned by me."

At all times, in the midst of his campaigns, with military cares upon his mind, the duke appears to have listened to the complaints of his wife, and to have entered into the trifling details of court jealousies which disturbed her. She was doubtless troubled at all times by enemies, and treacherous, seeming friends, and she does not appear to have spared him the knowledge of her annoyances at home. He writes in one letter from Ancott, Sept. 24, 1705:—

"I pity you for what you suffer by the baseness of Lady Frecheville," (a lady of the bedchamber,) "but if you should leave off visiting, and give your reason for it, I should think it might be the occasion of some more disagreeable discourses: but I should think it might be better if you did tell some part of what you have been told to Mrs. Boscawen, and that might make her more cautious for the future; for you never can make her a good woman: but if it has the effect to make her hold her tongue, it is all you ought to expect."

His letters to the duchess continue always to breathe the greatest affection throughout, and his delight at receiving communications from her is extreme.

"Hague, April 25, (May 6,) 1706.

"I shall not repeat to my dearest soul what I have writ to Lord Treasurer concerning the operations of this campaign, which has so ill begun in Italy, and I am afraid also in Germany. I have been of late extremely troubled with the headache, but I hope in a few days to be quit of it, since I shall leave this place a Sunday night, in order to be with the army a Wednesday, near Maestricht.

* * * When the yatch returns for Lord Halifax; I must desire you would send one of the pieces of the Princess Sophia's hangings, which has little figures on it, for the man at Bruxelles is obliged to make my hangings of the same fineness. I hear the letters are come to Briel, so that to-morrow morning I shall have the happiness of hearing from you, which I shall be sure to thank you for by a letter I shall have to go by the next post."

"May 9.

"I am to thank you for your three letters which I received yesterday morning, and for your kind expressions, which I do return with a sincere heartfull of love for my dearest soul; and at the same time assure you that, during the remainder of my life, I shall be careful in doing everything that may oblige you. I hope you may forget whatever I may have said or done that might have made you uneasy, for my whole thoughts are bent on the being happy with you."

That he looked to her for advice, and dreaded her disapprobation of his measures, is evident from what he says in the same letter in continuation:—

"I know not what letter you may have seen that should make you think that I had told my design to 360." (This cipher seems to stand either for Lord Monthermer or Halifax—all the personages named in the correspondence are indicated by numbers.) "I do assure you that I never did; but two nights ago, when I took leave of him, I told him that we resolved to send ten thousand men to Italy, which I desired he would let Lord Godolphin know. This was what I did not expect should be kept a secret; for almost as soon as he shall be in England we shall make the men march. It is true that I did endeavour to get all the information of him I could of the posture of affairs in Italy, but to this minute he knows nothing more of my design than the sending these ten thousand men.

"I should not say so much of this matter, but I am uneasy that you and Lord Sunderland could think I did not know 360 so as not to trust him."

"I am sure," (he writes with characteristic simplicity, in letters about the same date,) "you are so kind as to believe that I shall, with pleasure, take *all the pains imaginable this campaign;* being fully persuaded that good success is the only thing that can give me the blessing of ending my days quietly with you, my dear soul."

"It is impossible for my dearest soul to imagine the uneasy thoughts I have every day, in thinking that I have the curse, at my age, of being in a foreign country from you, and at the same time very little prospect of being able to do any considerable service for my country or the common cause. * * *.

"I do not know who the author of the review is: but I do not love to see my name in print; for I am persuaded that an honest man must be justified by his own actions, and not by the pen of a writer, though he should be a zealous friend."

When the author of one of the scurrilous libels of the day, a clergyman, was sentenced to stand in the pillory, the conduct of both the duke and duchess on the occasion was very generous. He writes to his wife:—

"I agree entirely with you, that Stephens ought not to be forgiven before sentence; but after he is in the Queen's power, if her Majesty has no objection to it, I should be glad he were forgiven; but I submit it to her Majesty's pleasure and the opinion of my friends."

It seems the culprit wrote a beseeching letter to the duchess, urging her to interfere, that the part of his sentence which condemned him to the pillory might be remitted, as the disgrace and shock to his wife and family would be one that they could not support. She was unable to resist this appeal, and made use of her influence with the Queen in his favour. The following is the Queen's answer:—

"I have, upon my dear Mrs. Freeman's pressing letter about Mr. Stephens, ordered Mr. Secretary Harley to put a stop to his standing in the pillory till further orders, which is in effect the same thing as if he was pardoned. Nothing but your desire could have inclined me to it, for, in my poor opinion, it is not right. My reason I will tell you when I have the happiness of seeing you. Till then, my dear Mrs. Freeman, farewell."

THE DUKE TO THE DUCHESS.

"I am very glad you have prevailed with the Queen for pardoning Stephens. I should have been very uneasy if the law had not found him guilty, but much more so if he had suffered the punishment on my account."

While Marlborough was carrying on the glories of the war abroad, the ancient friendship of the Queen and her once beloved, but now too powerful, favourite, was sadly waning. Apologies for not answering letters, because there was "no time before supper," and it was "uneasy to do so afterwards," sound strangely from those who formerly wrote—

> "Letters of love, brimful and running o'er,
> The paper filled till it could hold no more,"

Who would, with anxious interest—

> "Look what the corners, what the crossing tell,
> And left each folding for a fond farewell."*

A more decided tone was *at length* adopted by the Queen; and, to applications of the duchess, she ventures to reply, respecting the question of church preferments: that, in her opinion,—

"The Crown can never have too many livings at its own disposal; and therefore," (she adds,) "though there may be some trouble in it, it is a power I can never think it reasonable to part with, and I hope those that come after me will think the same."

Of course, in this assumed independence the mortified duchess recognised another hand than the Queen's, and she saw her favour slowly fading; but at this moment another victory turned the tables again, and the popular tide once more bore Marlborough over all his difficulties. The battle of Ramilies occurred, and the hero shone forth in greater lustre than ever.

Queen Anne wrote to him, on this occasion, "that she wanted words to express the true sense she had of the great service he had done his country and her in that great and glorious victory;

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* Crabbe.

and hoped it would be a means to confirm all good and honest people in their principles, and frighten others from being troublesome."

" She then spoke," says the duchess, who delivered the message to the duke, " of the alloy it was to all her satisfaction to consider what hazards he was exposed to; and repeated an obliging request, she had often made, that he would be careful of himself. I cannot doubt," adds the favourite, " of the Queen's kind disposition to my Lord Marlborough at this time, or of her willingness to oblige him."

On the occasion of the victory of Ramilies, the duke's letter to his beloved sharer in all his glories is as follows :—

" May 24, 11 o'clock Monday, 1706. Ramilies.

" I did not tell my dearest soul the design I had of engaging the enemy, if possible, to a battle, fearing the concern she has for me might make her uneasy : but I can now give her the satisfaction of knowing that on Sunday last we fought, and that God Almighty has been pleased to give us a victory. I must leave the particulars to this bearer, Colonel Richards; for, having been on horseback all Sunday, and, after the battle, marching all night, my head aches to that degree that it is very uneasy to me to write. Poor Bingfield (the duke's aide-de-camp), holding my stirrup for me and helping me on horseback, was killed. I am told that he leaves his wife and mother in a poor condition.

"I can't write to any of my children, so you will let them know I am well, and that I desire they will thank God for preserving me: and pray give my duty to the Queen, and let her know the truth of my heart, that the greatest pleasure I have in this success is, that it may be a great service to her affairs: for I am sincerely sensible of all her goodness to me and mine. Pray believe me when I assure you that I love you more than I can express."

It is amusing to observe how intimately associated the duchess was by the world in her husband's successes. She was looked upon as the soul, and he the body of all the great enterprises which he undertook and successfully accomplished.

LORD HALIFAX TO THE DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH.

"June 1, 1706. Hanover.

"The letters are just come in that bring the particulars of Lord Marlborough's glorious victory. I cannot express my joy and transport; and no other consideration pleases me more than the thoughts of what satisfaction and delight it will be to your Grace. Madam, this last glorious act *has exalted and crowned the wife.* All Europe may now soon be in safety and repose: and no happiness that your Grace and Lord Marlborough can propose to yourselves will be thought sufficient for your merit."

In the midst of all the exultation which both felt in the praises and admiration of "all Europe," as usually happens to all mortals, there was bitterness in the sparkling cup, for continual allusions are made between the husband and wife to family dissensions.

"It is," says the duke, "very mortifying to me to see that nothing can amend 392 (Lady Monthermer). I beg of you to do me the justice, and yourself the ease, to believe that whatever they can say has no credit with me, when you assure me of the contrary. I can and do grieve as much as any parent can when a child is unkind. We must hope the best, and be always careful not to resent their carriage to such a degree as to make the town the judge who is right. * * *

"I am, with all my heart and soul,

"Yours."

"July 8.

"* * * You will have seen, by my last letter, that yours of the 17th had given me a great deal of uneasiness; but as that gives me trouble, so yours of the 20th and 21st have given me great satisfaction, for the quiet of my life depends upon your dear self and children.

"What you say in yours of the 20th is so reasonable, that it is impossible but your children must act accordingly, and you may be sure I shall be careful never to write anything but what may make them sensible of your kindness, and the obligations they have to you."

By the above allusions to her daughters, it will appear that the duchess and her children were not on the best terms: in particular, she and Lady Monthermer, afterwards Duchess of Montague, were constantly disputing, and their quarrels gave the greatest vexation to the duke, who, aware of his wife's unfortunate temper, seemed equally so of that of his daughter, when he said, "I wonder you cannot agree, you are so alike!"

It is related of the young and lively Duchess of Manchester, daughter of this Lady Monthermer, of whom Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, was very fond, that, on one occasion, when the grandmother was very old and not improved in temper, and was delighting in the gay sallies and agreeable conversation of her favourite grandchild, she exclaimed, "You are a good creature, but you *have* a mother!" "And *she* has a mother," laughingly and fearlessly replied the young lady, who knew her influence, and would not lose her advantage.

It was after the second triumph of Marlborough, and when Harley found it impossible by any means to establish himself in the favour of the duchess, and gain her to his interest, that he hit upon a plan which he found succeeded to the utmost, as trifles often do when more important engines fail. The one he used was ready to his hand in the person of a bedchamber woman named Abigail Hill, who had been placed about the Queen by the duchess herself. The duchess, in her letter to Dr. Burnet, gives a brief account of this person, in explanation to his inquiry as to the first cause of her disagreement with the Queen.

The duchess had liberally provided for the family of Abigail Hill as well as herself, and the return she made for the rescue of her whole race from abject poverty is sufficient to stamp her character; at the same time the preference of the Queen for a menial who could betray her benefactress argues an originally mean mind in her Majesty, or feelings strangely changed by time.

When the duchess became aware that she had relations who were in distress, she generously came forward to relieve them; and, no petty pride interfering to induce her to conceal her connexion with them, she placed them all in positions favourable to their advancement. Abigail she took to live with her and her children, and she says, "treated her with as great kindness as if she had been a sister."

"I never knew," says the duchess, in her own Vindication, "that there were such people in the world as the Hills till after the Princess Anne was married, and when she lived at the Cockpit; at which time an acquaintance of mine came to me, and said she believed I did not know that I had relations who were in want, and she gave me an account of them.

"When she had finished her story, I answered, that indeed I had never before heard of such relations, and immediately gave her ten guineas out of my purse for their present relief, saying, I would do what I could for them. Afterwards I sent Mrs. Hill more money, and saw her. She told me that her husband was the same relation to Mr. Harley as she was to me, but that he had never done anything for her." * * *

After the death of the parents, the duchess proceeds to state that she provided for the remaining four children, taking Abigail to live with her, and keeping her till an opportunity occurred to place her as bedchamber woman with the, then, princess.

The younger sister was made laundress to the Duke of Gloucester's establishment, and on the young prince's death, the duchess obtained for her a pension of two hundred a-year, paid out of the privy purse. The elder son was placed in the Custom-house, a relation of the Duke of Marlborough's becoming bound for him for two thousand pounds.

"His brother," the duchess relates, "(whom the *bottle-men* afterwards called *honest* Jack Hill) was a tall boy, whom I clothed (for he was all in rags) and put to school at St. Albans to one Mr. James, who had been an usher under Dr. Busby, of Westminster, and whenever I went to St. Albans I sent for him, and was as kind to him as if he had been my own child. After he had learned what he could there, a vacancy happening of page of honour to the Prince of Denmark, his highness was pleased, at my request, to take him. I afterwards got my Lord Marlborough to make him groom of the bedchamber to the Duke of Gloucester, and though my lord always said that Jack Hill was *good for nothing,* yet, to oblige me, he made him his aide-de-camp, and afterwards gave him a regiment. But it was his sister's interest that raised him to be a *general,* and to command in that ever memorable battle of Quebec. I had no share in doing him the honours."

With considerable asperity the indignant benefactress of this race of ungrateful upstarts goes on:—

"To finish what I have to say on this subject; when Mr. Harley thought it useful to attack the Duke of Marlborough in parliament, this Quebec *general,* this *honest* Jack Hill, this *once ragged boy whom I clothed,* happening to be sick in bed, was nevertheless persuaded by his sister to get up, wrap himself in warmer clothes than those I had given him, and go to the House *to vote against the duke.* I may here add, that even the *husband* of Mrs. Masham had several obligations to me: it was at my instance that he was first made a page, then an equerry, and afterwards groom of the bedchamber to the prince; for all which he himself thanked me, as for favours procured by my means."

The singular contrast offered in the servile, humble, soft and pliant Abigail Hill's deportment to that of the commanding and proud duchess; the absence of all superiority, and the assumed affectionate admiration to which the Queen had been of late unaccustomed from her haughty friend, wrought a great change in the mind of Anne. She found too, that as regarded both religious opinions and politics, Mrs. Hill coincided with her: she was, or pretended to be to serve her purpose, an enemy to the Hanoverian succession, and to a certain extent, in fact as far as the Queen wished, a partisan of the Stuarts.

In secret, Abigail lost no opportunity of showing her sympathy for her Majesty's taste, though in the presence of the still redoubted duchess, she kept her veil of humility and deference close: she observed the frequent disagreements between the friends, and profited by them to avoid unpleasant topics, and to discover those which were most pleasing to her royal mistress's ear.

Every one at court had become aware of the influence of the new favourite before the duchess herself perceived it, and it was not till the scene took place which she relates to Bishop Burnet, of the familiar entrance of her cousin into the Queen's presence, and her equivocation about her marriage, that her eyes began to be opened.

THE DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH TO BISHOP BURNET.

"You ask what it was that first stuck with me: I never had any difficulty or dispute with her but about such things as were plainly for her own good, or about the Whig cause, which she was always averse to in her nature, but would certainly have come into at last, when she was persuaded to it by those men that had governed her so long, if it had not been for the secret influence of Mrs. Masham and Mr. Harley, which was a dead weight upon all the councils. The narrative of 1709 shows the beginning and true cause of all the difficulties I met with, which was the Queen's secret passion for Mrs. Masham, and the ill and crafty use which that base woman made of it. At the same time that the Queen would not own that she had any kindness for her but as a bedchamber woman, till she suffered her insolently to prefer in my office a woman that had served me formerly, and had been ungrateful to me for the favours I had done her. I have not all my papers here; but as soon as I can I will send you copies of everything. You ask what were the schemes proposed. I had no scheme of any kind, but to get honest men into the service, and such as would not give us up to France. And if it be that I was too warm and pressing in that matter, it should be considered, at the same time, that I had long had opportunities of knowing men and their particular actions, and there were some employed by the Queen at first, that I actually knew were against the government. How, then, could I honestly be silent, or how better employ my interest and credit than in getting her Majesty out of such hands, though I must tell you, I never, or very rarely, succeeded in any endeavour of this kind till the ministers themselves came into it at last, though I followed it very closely with them as well as with her Majesty.

"As to the names, Morley and Freeman, the Queen herself was always uneasy if I said the word highness or majesty, and would say, from the first, how awkward it was to write every day in the terms of princess, &c. And when she chose the name merely for herself, for no reason that I remember but that she liked it or the sound of it, I am not sure that I did not choose the other with some regard to my own humour, which it seemed in some sort to express.

"You inquire into the ground of favour to the Hills. I can only tell you that I did not know there were such people till about twenty years ago, when I was told by an acquaintance that I had relations that were in want, and that this woman was a daughter of my father's sister. My father had in all two-and-twenty brothers and sisters, and though I am very little concerned about pedigrees or family, I know not why I should not tell you that his was reckoned a good one, and that he had, in Somersetshire, Kent, and St. Albans, four thousand pounds a-year. However, it was not strange that, when the children were so many, their portions were small, and that one of them married this Mr. Hill, who had some business in the city rather as a merchant and proprietor, and was some way related to Mr. Harley, and by profession an anabaptist. From the time I knew their condition, I helped them every way as much as I could, to which I had no motive but charity and relationship. But after I brought this woman into court, she always had a shy reserved behaviour towards me, always avoided entering into free conversation, and made excuses when I asked her to go abroad with me. And what I thought then ill breeding or surly honesty, has since proved to be a design deeply laid, as she had always the artifice to hide very carefully the power and influence she had over the Queen. An instance of which I remember when I was with the Queen at Windsor, and went through my own lodgings a private way, and unexpected. She unlocked the door in a loud familiar manner, and was tripping across the room with a gay air, but upon seeing me, she immediately stopped short, and acting the part of a player, dropped a grave curtsey, when she had gone a good way without making any, and in a faint low voice cried, 'Did your Majesty ring, pray?' And to cover still her power with the Queen, even after she married, when I asked her if her Majesty knew of her marriage before it was done, she looked up to the ceiling a good while in a confused, awkward manner, and then said, 'Yes, the Queen taxed her with it, and she believed the bedchamber women had told it her:' the truth was, that her Majesty was present at the marriage, with no other worthy person but the Scotch doctor, and had called for so much money more than usual just before, that it is reasonable to conclude good part of it was laid out upon that great occasion: and at the time that I came to present her sister, I asked where the Queen was, and if she would not go to her, upon which she stared back as if she had been a stranger in the place, and had hardly known the way to the Queen's closet. And the whole time Mrs. Masham took all occasions to say, that sure no family was ever so much obliged to another as hers to me. The Queen was still professing that she was not the least altered. I was groom of the stole, she but a dresser, my relation, that owed everything to me, was married without my knowledge, and her Majesty, that never for thirty years kept anything from me, concealed this important secret till I had it from other hands. But a good deal of this is mentioned in another paper * * * and I can add no more to it, unless it be that Mr. Masham owed to me the first three things he had at court, page, equerry, and groom of the bedchamber: at least he thanked me for them all, even the last, for which he has very honourably taken

Lord Ryalton's employment, who must now depend in great measure upon his friends for support, and he is very unlikely ever to have given any offence to her Majesty or any one else.

"I observe that you take notice of my not attending so much as others have done, and give some good reasons for it, to which may be added, I did constantly write abundance of letters in answer to the petitions and applications that were made, by which her Majesty was pleased, because I saved her a great deal of trouble: and if, besides this, the time be considered that I passed in seeing her in private, which is what she always desired most, it will answer more than the attendance of other people. And if I had been a diligent waiter in public, I should never have had a moment to do anything for myself." * * *

Endorsed:—

"This was written to a friend of mine,* part of instructions to write a history, which he did write, but not near so well as that which was wrote after I left England."

Although the duchess had no idea to how great an extent the intimacy with Abigail had extended, yet she knew well enough that she was supplanted in the Queen's regard; that she should be so in power, however, probably never suggested itself to her thoughts as possible.

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* Dr. Burnet, for the History of his own Times.

It must be confessed that the freedom of the duchess's remarks are beyond what usually passes between friends in ordinary life: and Queen Anne must have had a mind of great superiority, and a very gentle temper, to endure with equanimity the occasional severity of her Mentor, when irritated, whose home truths she was obliged to hear.

"Even from twelve years old," writes the duchess to the Queen, "you have heard in your father's court strange names given to men by flatterers in these former reigns, for no reason in the world but that they would not contribute to carry on popery. That, and many other things, too long to repeat in a letter, has given your Majesty very wrong notions; and you are like people that never read but one sort of books—you can't possibly judge unless you heard all things stated fairly. Besides, everybody in your station has a great disadvantage in conversing freely, as others do, in the world, and it is not so easy for you to come at the truth as those that see with their own eyes all that passes: you must depend upon the information and judgment of others; and I am sorry you have so little opinion of those that have hitherto led your Majesty into no misfortunes, nor that can have no interest but yours. Much more might be said, but I will not trouble you with another sheet of paper. I will end in begging and praying that you may be freed from the enchantment, which is the only thing I can call it."

The following is a letter which the duchess prided herself on having written, and which the duke, in one of his letters, professes to approve.

THE DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH TO QUEEN ANNE.

"Sunday Morning, Oct. 20, 1706.

"I must, in the first place, beg leave to remind you of the name of Mrs. Morley, and your faithful Freeman, because, without that help, I shall not be well able to bring out what I have to say, it is so awkward to write anything of this kind in the style of an address, though none, I am sure, ever came from a purer heart, nor that can be the tenth part so serviceable to you, if you please, because they are generally meant for compliment, which people in Mrs. Morley's post never want, though very often it turns to their own prejudice. What I have to say is of another nature: I will tell you the greatest truths in the world, which seldom succeeds so well with anybody as flattery. Ever since I received the enclosed letter from Mr. Freeman, I have been in dispute with myself whether I should send it Mrs. Morley or not, because his opinion is no news to you; and after the great discouragements I have met with only for being faithful to you, I concluded it was no manner of purpose to trouble you any more: but reading the letter over and over, and finding that he is convinced he must quit Mrs. Morley's service if she will not be made sensible of the condition she is in, I have at last resolved to send it to you, and you will see by it how full of gratitude Mr. Freeman is, by his expressions, which were never meant Mrs. Morley to see. He is resolved to venture his life and fortune whenever it can be of use to you: and upon recalling everything to my memory that may fill my heart with all that passion and tenderness I had once for Mrs. Morley, I do solemnly protest I think I can no ways return what I owe her so well as by being honest and plain. As one mark of it, I desire you would reflect whether you have never heard that the greatest misfortune that ever happened to any of your family, has not been occasioned by having ill advice *and an obstinacy in their tempers.* * * *

"Though 'tis likely nobody has even spoke thoroughly to you ever upon those just misfortunes, I fear there is reason to apprehend there is nothing of this in the case of Mrs. Morley, since she has never been able to answer any argument, or to say anything that has the least colour of reason in it, and yet will not be advised by those that have given the greatest demonstrations imaginable of being in her interest. I can remember a time when she was willing to take advice, and loved those that spoke freely to her, and that is not five years ago; and is it possible that, when you seriously reflect, that you can believe that you can do the business on your hands without it? Can flatteries in so short a time have such power? or can you think it is safer to take it from those you have little or no experience of than from those that have raised your glory higher than was ever expected? And let people talk what they please of luck, I am persuaded whoever governs with the best sense will be the most fortunate prince.

"I am sure this letter will surprise Mrs. Morley, who, I believe, was in hopes she had got quite rid of me, and should never have heard from me again upon any such subject: but, instead of that, I have ventured to tell you that you have a fault. There is no perfection in this world: and whoever will be honest upon that subject does one in Mrs. Morley's circumstances more service than in venturing a hundred lives for her, and if I had as many, I am sure I could freely hazard them all to convince her (though used as I don't care to repeat) that she never had a more faithful servant.

"I beg you will be pleased to let me have this letter again, as well as Mr. Freeman's, because I have some reason to think Mrs. Morley will dislike this letter, as she has done many not written with quite so much freedom, and will accuse me to Mr. Freeman and Mr. Montgomery,* without saying what is my fault, which has been often done; and, having no copy of this letter, I would have it to show them in my own vindication: for nothing sets more heavy upon me than to be thought in the wrong to Mrs. Morley, who I have made the best return to that ever any mortal did: and what I have done has rarely been seen but upon a stage, everybody having some weakness or passion which is generally watched or humoured in Mrs. Morley's place, most people liking better to do themselves good than really to serve another: but I have more satisfaction in losing Mrs. Morley's favour upon that principle than any mercenary courtier ever had in the greatest riches that have been given, and though I can't preserve your kindness, you can't hinder me from endeavouring to deserve it by all the ways that are in my power."

The Queen writes sometimes in the most submissive manner, appealing to the tenderness of the duchess, whose usual answers are like those of an injured sovereign.

"I am," says the Queen, "in such haste, I can say no more but that I am very sorry dear Mrs.

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* Lord Godolphin, so called in the correspondence.

Freeman will be so unkind as not to come to her poor, unfortunate, faithful Morley, who loves her sincerely, and will do so to the last moment.

"Just as I came from Basset, I received my dear Mrs. Freeman's letter, and, though it is very late, I cannot content myself without thanking you for it. I hope by this time you have seen Lord Treasurer how innocent I am of one complaint, and so I think I am in all the others; for as for my not saying anything to you, in the Duke of Marlborough's letter, I did not think it necessary, nor you would not neither at any other time. And as to not enquiring after you the first time you came from Margate, how was it possible, not hearing of it till I was just going out of town myself? I shall dine at St. James's, an it please God, to-morrow, and shall be very glad to see you there when I am alone: and be assured, whenever you will be the same to me as you was five years ago, you shall find me the same tender, faithful Morley."

The tone which runs through the notes which passed between the Queen and the duchess, before the secret of Mrs. Hill's marriage was discovered, plainly show that their affection had indeed waned:—

"I am glad your Majesty's kindness to my cousin Hill has been the occasion of doing a thing that I have thought a great while was reasonable; and, though I was not so lucky as to be heard upon that subject, no more than upon many others, I hope it will prove for your Majesty's service: and, for other solicitations, if I could be so indiscreet as to repeat it, you know by experience how easily you can resist them. But I must own I have not many suitors, and I believe the secret begins to be discovered, especially at court: in a little time I may expect a great deal of ease from it; and I have been, for some years, so much used to Mrs. Morley's unkind and unjust usage of Mrs. Freeman, that the trouble of it is pretty well over. My greatest concern now is to think of the prejudice it must do Mrs. Morley, when the true cause of it is known, which will make her character so very different from that which has always been given by her faithful Freeman. Till I know what way Mrs. Hill is to be presented to you, I do nothing in that matter."

From the time of Mrs. Masham's admittance to close attendance on the Queen, the duchess seemed in a constant state of irritation and annoyance: her letters to the Queen show the mortification and vexation she endured, and prove the petty and ungrateful conduct of the bedchamber woman, whose hold on the Queen's regard was sustained by a thousand mean and paltry instances of treachery to her benefactress. That Queen Anne, who had once been really attached to a woman like the duchess, could condescend to replace her by such a rival is not a little surprising, and shows the true bent of her character to have been such as to render her unworthy of the friendship of an honest and high-minded woman. That the duchess herself enters into details of petty injuries, and descends to justify herself, cannot be wondered at; for such subjects were forced upon her, and, much as it galled her feelings to be obliged to notice what she held in contempt, still she had no other course to pursue.

Queen Anne became wedded to the new amusement of listening to gossip and scandal; and, now that she was no longer obliged to exert the little energy and strength of mind which she possessed by communication with a person of spirit and sense, she at once sunk into her native and more congenial insignificance, and the duchess was thought of only as a tyrant from whose yoke she had happily escaped. She gave ear to all the tales that the malignity of Mrs. Hill had gathered or invented; and the duchess soon found that she was the constant theme of animadversion and comment between her late friend and her flatterer. It was but little likely that the Duchess of Marlborough would condescend to exculpate herself from paltry charges;

but, when accused by the weak Queen of speaking and "perpetually saying ill things" of the favourite, in the vexation of her heart she writes pettish letters to her Majesty, disclaiming the words attributed to her, and loading her rival with contempt :—

"I never," she says, "did say that she had taken money, or that it was a crime to have been in a mean service; the last thing being what she could not help; but it was publicly known, and I thought it reasonable to let you know it before the change gave occasion to more discourse, which, besides the particular mortification it must be to me, perhaps, without much vanity, some might wonder at; and, putting all things together, without being quite stupid, I can't but see that she aims at much more than she would have you believe; and, before this thing broke out, at least to me, she was so passionate or indiscreet (I don't know what to call it) as to write to me that Mrs. Morley had never shown her any distinction, notwithstanding she had the honour to be my cousin. This shows she is not so disinterested, or so indifferent, as she pretends, in most things; for I believe every body but herself thought she was distinguished enough in having the honour to serve you. * * *

"What I said of people's taking money was only as a caution to you; and in these very terms, that

I had never sold your favours, when my circumstances were indifferent, and that I had nothing upon earth to desire but that all you had to give might be disposed of to your honour, and to strengthen the government. I never said Mrs. Hill took money; but said she had acquaintance that everybody knew would take money for anything upon earth; that by experience I knew what the custom of the world was, that money would be offered, and arguments too, whenever it was thought there was credit, to persuade people that it was usual in such cases to take money, and no hurt: and one did not know what people might be persuaded to that had an inclination to mend their condition, nor what characters they might give of people and things from that temptation—want of knowledge and experience, which very possibly might not turn to the interest or account of Mrs. Morley.

"* * * These are the very words that I have said to you; and, if you will reflect, they were expressed with so little passion, that, the last time I waited upon you, there were very long spaces on both sides, when it was a profound silence. I never stirred once from behind the screen where I first stood, that I remember: I never in the whole conversation once pulled out my pocket handkerchief till after I had taken my leave. When at your door you were pleased to give me a mark of your favour, that brought tears into my eyes, and

I answered you as Brutus did his friend; and I am sure no woman ever was a better than I have endeavoured to be to Mrs. Morley: and, if she had had me and her servants of more than twenty years' experience, she would not have been under these difficulties she now is. Their councils, as long as followed, were very successful; and I am sure I have made it the business of my life to serve you well, and to give you the character you would wish to have. Whatever freedom I have taken in speaking to you for your own service, it was when you were alone; and, if you had believed those you have so much reason to credit, without letting so many people be witnesses how hard you are to be persuaded to what is generally thought for your interest and security, it would have been more for your service.

"The consequences of which are plainly to make all those that are true to your interest so uneasy and jealous, that I fear they will never more act as they would have done."

It is lamentable to think how much the mind of the duchess was harassed:

"From mighty wrongs to petty perfidy,"

she was pursued by the "human things" who stood ready to take advantage of her weak mistress's falling off from her former regard, and who lost no opportunity to injure and annoy her.

Anonymous letters showered in upon her, in order to induce her to commit herself by joining interested persons against the new favourite; but she disdained to avail herself of concealed means, and openly avowed her disgust of Mrs. Masham and her associates.

There were not wanting treacherous friends amongst the great, who, appearing to deplore the sudden disfavour into which the duchess had fallen, were merely watching the time to pay court to the new favourite: amongst these was the Duke of Shrewsbury, who thus writes to the duchess:—

"Feb. 21, 1707-8.

"My head has been so completely filled with what has so lately happened at court, that, without dissimulation, I confess to you I have little thought of myself or any one concern.

"I hope everything there has or will end as it ought to do; but it is amazing that any difficulty should be made about it. I own it is hard at first to choose one's friendships well; but, when they are once fixed upon, a merit like the person's you mention, and their worth experienced by a long conversation, it is past my comprehending how that should ever be lessened or shaked, especially by the cunning insinuations of one who, every step she advanced towards it, must discover the basest ingratitude imaginable to a benefactor who has made her what she is.

"Confess ingenuously, would not such proceedings make one think a court were worse than I ever represented it to you?

"I will now speak nothing of my own business, being upon the late troubles out of humour and conceit of the very name: besides, having thoughts, some time next month, to come, for two or three months, to London, I shall then have an opportunity to discourse with you at large. In the meantime, keep this to yourself, and believe me most faithfully your humble servant."

The duchess herself has endorsed this letter, and her remarks are full of bitterness:—

> "This letter is in the Duke of Shrewsbury's own hand, and proves that, at the time he writ it, he thought the Duke of Marlborough and Lord Godolphin would get the better of Abigail; though when he found they did not, he assisted her in turning out all those that he had professed so much friendship to, as well as regard for their faithful services. Tho' the Duke of Sh——— desires that this letter might not be seen, yet ———, the person to whom it was writ, gave it to the Duke of Marlb——, and it is very probable, by the

duke's own direction: though, to make it look the more secret, he desires in his letter that they would keep what he writes concealed."

Her correspondent, Mr. Maynwaring, endeavours, in his letters, most strenuously to persuade the duchess that Mrs. Masham's reign will not last; and the duchess seems to have read his assurances with satisfaction, whether they were sincere on his part or not. He says,—

"I am persuaded that, whenever your Grace appears, Mrs. Abigail will lead but an uncomfortable life, and hardly venture to peep abroad. May I hope your presence will turn her into a bat, and that I shall see her come into a room where my Lady Hervey is at play, and set her good ladyship a crying.

"The (Queen's) letter, whatever else may be said of it, still shows a great deal of regard for your Grace, and great unwillingness to say anything that may shock you: and some of the protestations in it are *very humble and condescending;* and especially considering how home your Grace had touched upon the tender point in your letter of the 4th April. Yet I do not wonder that the expression 'Masham and me' made you sick, for it is very nauseous. King James the First's usual expression, 'Steenie and I,' meaning the Duke of Buckingham and himself, was always laughed at very justly, notwithstanding the quality and greatness of that duke."

He urges her to come to court again, and defeat her enemies :—

"Since it is so absolutely necessary that your Grace should return to court, I hope you will do it with the best air you can : and therefore, casting a veil upon all those parts of the letter that are liable to be remarked upon, you may extremely well take the occasion of coming back in good humour : from the favour of not demanding the letters again, from the fresh assurance of the promise to your family, and several other kind expressions. These, I beg, might be the subjects of your letter; and since your Grace has observed that the other style is softened, you would alter yours. When a matter can't be carried as one would wish, the next thing is, to try to carry it as it will go. And I am fully persuaded, from several touches in the letters, and by the evasive answers which are made about Mrs. Masham's going to prayers, and about the enquiry after Greg's confession,* and by the not mentioning Mr. Harley at all, though such fair occasions are given for it, that this mischief lies so very deep, that it is necessary for all hands to join, to prevent the ill consequences of it. And that which I am now convinced cannot be done, by any means, at this time, may certainly be brought about by management and address.

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* Gregg, who was employed under Harley, was detected carrying on a treasonable correspondence with France, which threw much discredit on Harley, and caused his expulsion from the ministry.

"Though your Grace seems to think that kindness once gone never returns, I believe several instances may be given to the contrary: and I think it is plain, in the present case, that there is still a great unwillingness to break quite with your Grace, notwithstanding the present phrenzy; which I the more readily believe, because I cannot comprehend that ever anybody was so mad to fall out with you willingly. Therefore, for God's sake, madam, come to court again; and be assured, that as nothing will so much dark the hopes of your enemies, nothing will so please and revive your friends, who complain, though it is very gently, of your going away.

"An inclination that is shameful, and that must be concealed and denied, grows so uneasy, by degrees, that it wears itself away: and it ought rather to be a sport than an uneasiness to anybody. A good ridicule has often gone a good way in doing a business; and this, I am sure, is of such a kind that it needs only to be mentioned to make it ridiculous. And I think the ill effects of it would be immediately prevented, in a great measure, if my Lord Somers could be brought in; for my

Lord Treasurer and he, and the two secretaries, so perfectly agreeing, what great feats could Mr. Harley do with his woman, that he boasts he will play against anybody? I am sure, if they play well at anything, it must be some cheating game. If your Grace, with the ministers and all the most considerable men in England, cannot put an end to the senseless farce of Harlequin and Abigail;* if this nation be, for its sins, under such a fatality, I think it is no great matter what becomes of it; nor if anybody be ever consulted or conversed with upon public matters, but the able councillor that your Grace says I should laugh to hear of.

"I most humbly beg pardon for the liberty I have taken, which I should never forgive myself, but that I think your Grace's commands required it." * * *

At length the duchess perceived clearly enough that a *scene* was being played by Mrs. Masham and the Queen, in which she was to have no part.

The duchess, when she discovered that not only was Mrs. Hill's marriage known to the Queen, though she had denied any knowledge of the event, but that she had been herself at the wedding, and given a large dower to the bride, immediately wrote to Mrs. Masham, to desire an explanation of her reasons for concealing so important an occurrence from one whom she had every reason to consider as her only friend. The cautious answer which she received to her question was dictated, as she easily perceived, by no other than Harley, whose tool she now saw, too late, her unworthy cousin was; and it was sufficiently plain that her empire over the mind of the weak Queen was gone.

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* See Ballad. Coxe.

It appears unjust to imagine, as some contemporary authors have done, that the long-maintained friendship of the duchess and the Queen was insincere on the part of the former: the proofs given by the duchess of her anxiety for the honour of Anne and of the country are sufficient to do away with the supposition; but it is not unnatural to imagine that the discovery of the Queen's duplicity may have disgusted, and at length nearly effaced, her regard.

The duchess was, whatever her faults, upright, honest, truth-telling, and fearless: and she was long before *she* could suspect the treachery and meanness of a dependant; and still longer in believing that the woman who had for so many years been her pupil, and had been accustomed to her frankness, could condescend to a low cabal, and, displacing her from her councils, solace herself with the society of a person so immeasurably her inferior.

When the duchess could no longer doubt the mortifying truth, she communicated the fact to her friend, Lord Godolphin, and to her husband, then abroad. Marlborough, wearied with these, as he considered them, petty dissensions, wrote a somewhat stern letter to his wife:—

"The wisest thing," he observes, "is to have to do with as few people as possible. If you are sure that Mrs. Masham speaks of business to the Queen, I should think you might, with some caution, tell her of it, which would do good: for she certainly must be grateful, and mind what you say."

He advised the duchess also to—

"Put an end to those controversies, and to avoid all occasions of suspicion and disgust: and not to suffer yourself to grow insolent upon the favour of fortune: otherwise," he adds, "I shall hardly be able hereafter to excuse your fault, or to justify my own actions, however meritorious."

To this the duchess meekly replied,—

"I will take care of those things, so that you need not be in any fear about me;" but she could not avoid exclaiming, with her usual characteristic spirit, "whoever shall think to remove me out of the Queen's favour, let them take care lest they remove themselves."

Annoyed and distressed at the details of paltry wrongs which he was obliged to hear, Marlborough got impatient, and forgot that sometimes

> "Dire events from little causes spring:"

he did not contemplate his own, his wife's, and his friends' disgrace, from the contemptible "quarrels among the women about the court."

"If you have good reasons," he writes, "for what you write of the kindness and esteem the Queen has for Mrs. Masham and Mr. Harley, my opinion should be, that my Lord Treasurer and I should tell her Majesty what is good for herself; and if that will not prevail, to be quiet, and to let Mr. Harley and Mrs. Masham do what they please: for I own I am quite tired, and if the Queen can be safe I shall be glad. I hope the Lord Treasurer will be of my mind; and then we shall be much happier than by being in a perpetual struggle."

He, however, appears to have been startled at length into saying,—

"What you write concerning the Queen, Mr. Harley, and Mrs. Masham, is of that consequence, that I think no time is to be lost in putting a stop to that management, or else let them have it entirely in their own hands."

At length the mask of affected humility assumed by Mrs. Masham was thrown off entirely; and, confident in the support of Queen Anne, the upstart favourite exhibited all the scorn and insolence which was in her nature. It were long and tedious to relate the stinging impertinences, the insulting condescensions which the duchess records as having endured from her lately exalted cousin: one instance she dwells on with bitter recollection, for it was the first time the minion of the Queen had dared to show how little she regarded her.

When, having with difficulty obtained an interview with Mrs. Masham, the duchess upbraided her with her treachery, and observed, that she was certain no good intentions toward herself could have influenced her actions, Abigail replied—

"... very gravely, that she was sure the Queen, who had always loved me extremely, would *always be very kind to me.* I was some minutes before I could recover from the surprise with which so extraordinary an answer struck me. To see a woman whom I had raised out of the dust put on such a superior air, and to hear her assure me, by way of consolation, that the Queen would always be very kind to me!—I was stunned to hear her say so strange a thing!"

Coriolanus, when insulted by Aufidius, alone can be compared in his indignation to the duchess, braved by a menial; she might indeed exclaim,—

"——— Thou hast made my heart
Too great for what contains it!—Oh slave!"

The remarks of a late historian of the duchess, on the occasion of the memorable explosion between the favourites, are too judicious to be passed over:—

"Upon a review," says Mrs. Thomson, "of the circumstances which attended this notable quarrel, the character of the duchess appears in a much more favourable light than, from the many defects of her ill-governed mind, could reasonably have been expected.

"In the first instance, she was generous to her kinswoman, confiding, and lenient. Slow in being aroused to suspicion, her conduct was straightforward and judicious when the truth was forced upon her unwilling conviction. She acted with sincerity, but not with address, and feelings too natural for a courtier to indulge were betrayed in the course of those altercations, in which the character of Abigail is displayed in the worst colours. Artful and plausible, yet daring and insolent, according to circumstances; shameless in her ingratitude, the mean and despicable tool of others, with few advantages of education,—that abject but able woman acquired an ascendency over the mind of Anne that was truly astonishing.

"* * * It is remarkable, that when Anne learned to dispense with the friendship of the Marlborough family, she ceased to be great abroad and respected at home."

The following somewhat severe character of Queen Anne is given by the duchess, in her celebrated account of her own conduct:—

"Queen Anne had a person and appearance not at all ungraceful till she grew exceedingly gross and corpulent. There was something of majesty in her look, but mixed with a sullen and constant frown, that plainly betrayed a gloominess of soul, and a cloudiness of disposition within. She seemed to inherit a good deal of her father's moroseness, which naturally produced in her the same sort of stubborn positiveness in many cases, both ordinary and extraordinary, as well as the same sort of bigotry in religion.

"Her memory was extremely great, almost to a wonder, and had these two peculiarities very remarkable in it,—that she could, whenever she pleased, forget what others would have thought themselves obliged by truth and honour to remember, and remember all such things as others would think it a happiness to forget. Indeed, she chose to retain in it very little besides ceremonies and customs of courts, and such like insignificant trifles; that her conversation, which otherwise might have been enlivened by so great a memory, was only made the more empty and trifling, by its turning chiefly upon *fashion* and rules of precedence, or observations upon the weather, or some such poor topics, without any variety of entertainment. Upon which account it was a sort of unhappiness to her that she naturally loved to have a great crowd come to her: for when they were come to court, she never cared to have them come in to her, nor to go out herself to them, having little to say to them, but that it was either hot or cold; and little to inquire of them, but how long they had been in town, or the like weighty matters. She never discovered any readiness of parts, either in asking questions or in giving answers. In matters of ordinary moment, her discourse had nothing of brightness or wit; and, in weightier matters, she never spoke but in a hurry, and had a certain knack of sticking to what had been dictated to her, to a degree often very disagreeable, and without the least sign of understanding or judgment.

"Her letters were very indifferent, both in sense and spelling, unless that they were generally enlivened with a few passionate expressions, sometimes pretty enough, but repeated over and over again, without the mixture of anything, either of diversion or instruction.

"Her civility and good manners in conversation (to which the education of great persons naturally leads) were general enough, till in her latter days her new friends untaught her these accomplishments, and then her whole deportment was visibly changed, to that degree, that when some things disagreeable to her own honour or passion have been laid before her, she would descend to the lowest and most shocking forms of contradiction; and what, in any of meaner station, would have been esteemed the height of unpoliteness.

"Her friendships were flames of extravagant passion, ending in indifference or aversion. Her love to the prince seemed, in the eye of the world, to be prodigiously great; and great as was the passion of her grief, her stomack was greater; for, that very day he died, she eat three very large and hearty meals; so that one would think that, as other persons' grief takes away their appetites, her appetite took away her grief. Nor was it less remarkable, where there was so great an appearance of love, the peculiar pleasure she took, before his funeral, in settling the order of it, and naming the persons that were to attend, and placing them according to their rank, and to the rules of precedence, which was the entertainment she gave herself every day till that solemnity was over.

"I know that, in some libels, she has been reproached as one who indulged herself in drinking strong liquors; but I believe this was utterly groundless, and that she never went beyond such a quantity of strong wines as her physicians judged to be necessary for her.

"Her religion was chiefly implicit faith and subjection, accompanied with the form and course of a sort of piety. She had a zeal for the Church, as for an infallible guide; and a devotion for churchmen, to such a degree, as if she thought this sufficient to sanctify every other part of her conduct; and the churchmen repaid her civility in compliments and adorations: for I have often blushed, both for her and for her preachers, when I have heard it almost constantly, with the most fulsome flattery, affirmed to her face and to her satisfaction, that all we enjoyed was granted by Almighty God as the reward of her piety and religion. And, indeed, if religion consist in such zeal and such devotion, or in punctual and formal preparations for the Communion, or the like (as she had learnt, without doubt, from such tutors as she had been blessed with), then it cannot be denied that she had as much religion as well could be lodged in one breast.

"But if religion be justice, truth, sincerity, honour, and gratitude, or the like, then one cannot tell what to say: but let her practice speak for herself, her broken vows, her violated alliances, her behaviour whether to her old friends at home, her conduct to her good allies abroad, or the returns she made to her native country for an immense treasure of money and blood spent for the vindication of her title and the security of her life. She would speak in public of her zeal for her Protestant succession, and once she surprised the nation with the news of a particular friendship between herself and the House of Hanover: but God knows what she meant, unless it was to delude the ignorant and unsuspicious part of her people: for as for heart, there was proof enough in due time that that was engaged at another court: there was little of it left for that House, and it came to be accounted an affront to herself to name it in addresses to the throne. In most cases she was insensible of what related to the public, and could, with great coldness and tranquillity, let an express that was known to come with any important good news lie unopened for half an hour, though she was alone, and had nothing in the world to do, whilst all about her were waiting with the utmost impatience to know the contents of it.

"She loved fawning and adoration, and hated plain dealing,* even in the most important cases. She had a soul that nothing could so effectually move as flattery or fear. A sudden surprise in an unguarded moment would make the truth sometimes discover itself in her look, or in some unlucky word; but if she had time and warning enough to learn her lesson, all the arguments and reason in the world could not extort from her that she had not a mind to acknowledge. In such cases she seemed to have the insensibility of a rock, and would resolutely dissemble or disown anything in the world, and *by repeating one single answer in the same words,** could tire out the patience and elude all such enquiries as were disagreeable to herself.

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* This assertion can scarcely be reconciled with her long intimacy with the duchess.

"She had no native generosity of temper, nor was often known of herself to do a handsome action, either as a reward or as a piece of friendship. The diligence and faithfulness of a servant signified but little with her, where she had no passion for the person. Nor did she hardly ever think, either of rewarding any because they were deserving, or of raising any because they were miserable, till such things were urged upon her by those whom she loved. And even to those whom she professed to love, her presents were very few, and generally very insignificant, as fruit, venison, or the like, unless in cases where she was directed by precedents in the former reigns.

"In a word, she had little zeal for the happiness of others, but a selfishness that was great enough to make every other consideration yield to it. She was headstrong and positive in matters of the utmost importance, and at last preferred her own humour and passion before the safety and happiness of her own people and of all Europe, which she had either not sense enough to see or not goodness enough to regard. Whether her memory will be celebrated by posterity with blessings or curses time will show."

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* This the Queen did in an interview which she granted to the duchess, after making her wait for it a long time, and repeatedly putting off the appointment she had made. Her words then were, to all appeals of the duchess: "You desired no answer, and you shall have none;" the parrot-phrase repeated continually, as a reply to everything.

"Look here, upon this picture, and on this!"

On the statue of Queen Anne at Blenheim, the following character, traced by the same hand, presents her to the reader in a very different light. Which is the true portrait is left to conjecture :—

"Queen Anne had a person very graceful and majestic: she was religious without affectation, and always meant well. Though she believed that King James had followed such counsel as endangered the religion and laws of her country, it was a great affliction to her to be forced to act against him even for security. Her journey to Nottingham was never concerted, but occasioned by the sudden great apprehensions she was under when the King returned from Salisbury.

"That she was free from ambition appeared from her easiness in letting King William be placed before her in the succession; which she thought more for her honour than to dispute who should wear first that crown that was taken from her father. That she was free from pride appeared from her never insisting upon any one circumstance of grandeur, more than when her family was established by King Charles the Second: though, after the Revolution, she was presumptive heir to the crown, and after the death of her sister was in the place of a Prince of Wales. Upon her accession to the throne the Civil List was not increased, although that revenue, from accidents, and from avoiding too rigorous exactions (as the Lord Treasurer Godolphin often said) did not, one year with another, produce more than one hundred thousand pounds. Yet she paid many pensions granted in former reigns, which have since been thrown upon the public. When a war was found necessary to secure Europe from the power of France, she contributed, for the ease of the people, in one year, out of her own revenue, a hundred thousand pounds. She gave likewise the first fruits to augment the provisions of the poorer clergy. For her own privy purse she allowed but twenty thousand pounds a-year, (till a very few years before she died, when it was encreased to six-and-twenty thousand pounds,) which is much to her honour because that is subject to no account. She was as frugal in another office, (which was likewise her private concern,) that of the robes, for in nine years she spent only thirty-two thousand and fifty pounds, including the coronation expense, as appears by the records in the Exchequer, where the accounts were passed.

"She had never any expense of ostentation or vanity: but never refused charity when there was any reason for it. She always paid the greatest respect imaginable to King William and Queen Mary. She was extremely well bred; treated her chief ladies and servants as if they had been her equals. To all who approached her, her behaviour, decent and dignified, showed condescension without art or manners, and maintained subordination without servility.

"SARAH MARLBOROUGH."

There is considerable contradiction in the two accounts, it must be allowed, and, before either of them can be believed implicitly, it would be requisite that one should be forgotten. The first was, no doubt, written in a time of irritation; the other, after years had softened down asperities, and early remembrances of regard were cherished in opposition to late reminiscences of wrong.

The duchess, willing to reconcile the two characters she had given of Queen Anne, the public and the private one, remarks in her notes:—

"All the historian relates is exactly the truth; and the inscription I have put upon the pedestal was likewise true. But, as I had great obligations to the Queen, I thought it unbecoming in me to relate anything to her disadvantage, whatever the annals of those times would make appear that I could not help. For everybody must know what she said from the throne, the insincere assurances she gave her allies, and the treatment in discharging those faithful servants, of whom she had more than twenty years' experience, and, at last, how, by the advice of my Lord Oxford, she was brought to throw away all the successes she had gained in the wars, at a time when she was so very near ruining the power of France as never to leave it anything to impose to the disadvantage of England.

"But notwithstanding all these wonderful things, brought about by a low chambermaid, by the direction of cunning men that wanted to come into great places and power themselves, they certainly laid the foundation of all the mischiefs Sir Robert Walpole has so nearly completed in 1740, who, I really believe, did not at first design to put England into any danger from France. * * *

"Now, I must explain what I mean, to reconcile, as far as I can, the different characters of Queen Anne. She certainly, as is said on the inscription, meant well, and was not a fool: but nobody can maintain that she was wise, nor entertaining in conversation. She was in everything what I described her; ignorant in everything but what the parsons had taught her when a child: and she never failed in performing exactly the rules given her by them with great sincerity, for she was not in anything of that sort a hypocrite.

"But their directions were not the most material part of religion. She was naturally fond of the Church and the clergy, and, at the beginning of her kindness to me she would have started at anybody's persuading her to profess a falshood, or to have done anything plainly wrong. But when she came to be flattered by her new counsellors, who never told her but one thing at a time she was to do; and no doubt, if she had any scruple in complying with them, they frightened her by making her think it was absolutely necessary to be done, to preserve her crown and even her life: for otherwise she would have the same usage from the Whigs that her grandfather, King Charles I. had from such sort of people; and her own natural inclination being to be fond of the Tories,—being very ignorant, very fearful, with very little judgment, it is easy to be seen she might mean well, being surrounded with so many artful people, who at last compassed their designs to her dishonour.

"For, though she never said, that I know of, a simple thing of herself, if she happened to like anybody, she had such a diffidence of herself that she would always yield to the persuasion of those she liked, even though they had still less judgment than herself.

" She certainly was as decent in her behaviour as I have formerly represented her, till the latter end of her reign, when a very brutal woman got into her favour.

" She was not extravagant in any of her expenses, which is a very good thing for subjects, because, whatever princes do, which is called generosity, the subjects feel it, because it is generally very foolishly applied."

It would have been far more dignified in the duchess, when she found herself superseded, to have followed her husband's temperate advice, and retired at once from the scene of contention.

" You may be sure," the duke writes, Sept. 19, 1707, " I shall never mention Mrs. Masham, either in letter or discourse. I am so weary of all this sort of management, that I think it is the greatest folly in the world to think any struggling can do good when both sides have a mind to be angry."

Earnestly did he follow up his advice by entreaties for their mutual retirement to their gorgeous palace of Blenheim.

" My glasses," he writes home, " are come, and I have bespoke the hangings: for one of my greatest pleasures is, in doing all that in me lies that we may, as soon as possible, enjoy that happy time of being comfortably together, which I think of with pleasure, as often as I have my thoughts free to myself."

The following characteristic letter from Lord Hervey, the "Lord Fanny" of Pope, to the Duke of Marlborough, is written about this time:—

"Ickworth, July 17, 1708.

"My Lord,

"The signal services your Grace so frequently repeats, for the peace and prosperity of your country and the common cause, (whereof your Grace is not only the present tutelary genius, but your glorious character and noble actions will even do everlasting honour to the age we live in,) will not suffer those who are so zealously interested in whatever concerns your Grace or them, as myself, to sit silent at a time when they happen in such eminent instances as the late battle and victory near Oudenarde, whereby your Grace has sufficiently convinced the French King that his *dernière ressource* in a general, the Duke de Vendome, can no more reassure the courage of his beaten troops against those led by your Grace's conduct, than when they fought under the command of his other marshals—Tallard, Marsin, or Villeroy.

"'Success so close upon thy troops does wait,
As if thou first hadst conquered fickle fate;
Since fortune, for thy righteous cause and thee,
Seems t' have forgot her lov'd inconstancy.'

"I know no farther refuge he has left him unless it be to play a second Pucelle d'Orleans upon you. But how vain a project must that prove, since we all know you have vanquished that sex as universally by the excellencies of your person as you have ours by the ascendency of your parts.

'Veux-tu des talens pour la cour?
Ils égalent ceux de la guerre;
Faut-il du mérite en amour?
Personne n'est plus gallant sur la terre.'

"Since, then, neither sex can no longer oppose you, we hope the time is now come, que notre grandeur *acheverez* d'enchaîner le démon qui s'oppose à la paix de l'univers: which must be recorded to posterity as the greatest achievement that was ever brought to pass in any age by the merit of one man.

''Tis you the length of scattered time contract,
And in few years the work of ages act:
Unparalleled in story is the change;
But nothing, where such virtue works, is strange.'

"That the stem may still continue in such skilful hands, which were the only ones capable of preventing the shipwreck which once so imminently threatened, not only this State, but all Europe, is the sincere desire of your Grace's

"&c. &c."*

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* 1737. Lord Hervey is at this time always with the King in vast favour. He has certainly parts and wit, but is the most wretched profligate man that ever was born, besides ridiculous: a painted face, and not a tooth in his head. And it is not above six months ago the King hated him so, that he would not suffer him to be one in his diversions at play. I think 'tis possible that Sir Robert Walpole may make some use of him at first, and perhaps the other may have vanity enough to imagine he may work himself up to be a great man: but that is too mad, I think, to be ever effected, because all the world, except Sir Robert, abhors him; and notwithstanding all the mischiefs Sir Robert has done the nation, and myself in particular, which generally people resent in the first place, I had much rather he should continue in power than my Lord Hervey.—*Duchess of Marlborough's Remarks on her Contemporaries.*

Lord Hervey, having felt some attacks of epilepsy, entered upon, and persisted in, a very strict regimen, and thus stopped the progress and prevented the effects of that dreadful disease. His daily food was a small quantity of asses' milk and a flour biscuit: once a week he indulged himself with eating an apple; he used emetics daily. Mr. Pope and he were once friends: but they quarrelled and persecuted each other with virulent satire. Pope, knowing the abstemious regimen which Lord Hervey observed, was so ungenerous as to call him a

"Mere curd of asses' milk."

Lord Hervey used paint to soften his ghastly appearance. Mr. Pope must have known this also, and therefore it was unpardonable in him to introduce it into his celebrated portrait. That satirist had the art of laying hold on detached circumstances, and of applying them to his purpose without much regard to historical accuracy.—*Lord Hailes.*

The Queen had some pangs of conscience, in spite of her joy at being emancipated from the thraldom, in ill-treating the great general who had filled her reign with glory; but the uninterrupted gossip which she delighted now to indulge in with her waiting-woman compensated for all.

"She staid," recounts the duchess, "all the sultry season, even when the prince was panting for breath, in that small house she had formerly purchased at Windsor: which, though hot as an oven, was then said to be cool, because, from the park, such persons as Mrs. Masham had a mind to bring to her Majesty could be let in privately from the garden."

Prince George of Denmark, of whose declining health the Queen is represented as being so careless, died at this time, and no attention on the part of Anne was wanting to soothe his last moments: her grief at his loss was extravagant, but she did not have recourse to her early friends to console her affliction, and it was with some difficulty the duchess, who felt sincerely for her bereavement, could gain admission to her presence. She did, however, succeed, and was in the chamber when the prince expired, and led the Queen from the sad spot: she even knelt before her for several hours, endeavouring in vain to induce her to retire to St. James's, and at last prevailed; the Queen all the time dreading the displeasure of her new favourite and tyrant, Mrs. Masham, in whose hands she was but a puppet.

The duchess's account of this scene is curious :—

"I knelt down to the Queen, and said all that I could imagine from a faithful servant, and one that she had professed so much kindness to; but she seemed not to mind me, but clapt her hands together, with other marks of passion: and when I had expressed all I could think of to moderate her grief, I knelt by her without speaking for some time, and then asked her to go to St. James's, upon which she answered, she would stay there (at Kensington); I said that was impossible; what could she do in such a dismal place? I made use of all the arguments that are common upon that head; but all in vain; she persisted that she would stay. Upon which I fancied that her chief difficulty in removing was, for fear she could not have so much of Mrs. Masham's company as she desired, if she removed from thence: and, without seeming to think so, I said nobody in the world ever continued in a place where a dead husband lay * * * at St. James's she need not see anybody that was uneasy to her, and might see any person that was any comfort to her as well there as anywhere else.

"I could see by her face that she had satisfaction in that. * * * Upon which she consented to go, but said, 'Don't come in to me till the hand of the watch comes to this place, and send Masham to me before I go.' *This I thought very shocking* * * * and resolved to avoid that, telling her (afterwards) that I thought it would make a disagreeable noise, &c."

As the Queen passed in the gallery, Mrs. Masham was, however, stationed to receive the Queen's looks—

"And," says the duchess, "at sight of that charming lady, as her arm was upon mine, which she had leaned upon, I found, notwithstanding her affection for the prince, she had strength to bend down towards Mrs. Masham like a sail, and went some steps more than was necessary to be nearer to her."

She afterwards—

"Ate a very good dinner, and at night," she adds, "I found her at table again, where she had been eating, and Mrs. Masham very close beside her, who went out of the room as soon as I came in, but with an air of insolence and anger." * * * "She wrote me a little note, at which I could not help smiling, that I should send to the Lord Treasurer to take care that some door might be taken down at the removing of the prince to Westminster, for fear the dear prince's body should be shook as he was carried out of some room; though she had long gone rumbling journeys with him to the bath, when he must feel it, and when he was gasping for breath. I did see the tears in her eyes two or three times after his death, upon his subject, and I believe she fancied she loved him, and she was certainly more concerned for him *than she was for the fate of Gloucester:* but her nature was very hard, and she was not apt to cry."

Mr. Maynwaring, in writing to the Duchess of Marlborough, alludes to the little real sorrow Queen Anne showed on her husband's death.

"I saw the old Vice this morning, who had been at court lately, and I could find by him that the Duke of Shrewsbury is in a good deal of apprehension about raising the money. The Vice himself sputters, and swears 'tis impossible. He says the Duke of Shrewsbury's lady* certainly gains favour, and has a most ridiculous way of pleasing. When she came in to the Queen, and found her rather dull, she cried out, 'My Queen, you must not think always of the poor prince,' which most absurd flattery pleases extremely. And as all people love to have their defects covered, so if any time we have not shown the concern we ought to do, one is glad, however, to have it thought so, and the less true one feel, the rather one likes to hear it.

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* This lady is thus named in another letter from Lady Cowper to the duchess: —

"Your description of the Duchess of Shrewsbury is very good. I have heard much such an account of her, only with this addition:

"There is a report that Mr. —— is to be cofferer. He has the true cast for a court, and is made to shine extremely at a basset or an ombre table, and to look gently and talk insipidly, which is all that seems required in this life."

The following is a letter from the Queen to the Duchess, in answer to a remonstrance she had made on occasion of an attempt of Mrs. Masham's to put some person of her nomination into a post connected with that which the duchess still held, as mistress of the robes. It is a singular contrast to the

My lord duke looking a little grave, she chucked him several times under the chin, bidding him look up amongst the company. *She is a great honour to a court.*"

The duchess says of her :—

"The duke had been abroad, at Rome, for many years, and brought over with him, at his return, a very old woman, his wife, an Italian papist, who had, upon this marriage, professed herself a Protestant. Her ambition, to be sure, rose upon such a marriage, and his covetousness, which was the prevailing bias in his constitution, and had increased upon him with years, made him now capable of receiving offers to his advantage with readiness enough."

kind letters of 'the poor, unfortunate, faithful Morley.'

"Windsor, Thursday noon, Oct. 1709.

"I had written so long a letter to you yesterday, which I desired Lord Treasurer to send, when I received yours, that I could not then write more, or else I should not have been so long without answering it. You need not have been in such haste, for Rainsford is pretty well again, and I hope will live a great while. If she should die, I will then turn my thoughts to consider who I know that I could like in that place, that being a post that, next to my bedchamber women, is the nearest to my person of any of my servants: and I believe nobody, nay, even you yourself, if you would judge impartially, could think it unreasonable that I should take one in a place so near my person that were agreeable to me. I know this place is reckoned under your office: but there is no office whatsoever that has the entire disposal of anything under them, but I may put in any one I please, when I have a mind to it. And now you mention the Duke of Somerset again, I cannot help upon this occasion saying, whenever he recommends any one to me, he never says it is his right, but submits to my determination, and *has done so upon occasions in which you have recommended people to me in posts under him.* But I do not say this that you should think

I hearken to everybody's recommendation; for indeed I do not, and will not; and for the person you are so mightily afraid should put any one into Rainsford's place, I dare answer, she will not go about recommending anybody. And if this poor creature should die, which, as I said before, I hope she will not, I shall then hearken to nobody's recommendation but my own, which I am sure you ought not to think any wrong or injustice to you.

"I have not yet so perfect an account of Somerset House, as I would have, which is the reason I have not yet said anything concerning poor Mrs. Howe, but I shall be able in a few days to let you know what lodgings she can have.

"I am ashamed to send you such a blottish scrawl; but it is so late I cannot stay to write it over again."

On a paper, not in the duchess's hand. "The Queen's letter, when Mrs. Masham designed to give her favourite a place in my office, who had been my nursery-maid. But she was useful to Mrs. Masham, and often went on messages, and was in private with the Queen."

In the duchess's hand. "This is a very odd letter, and a very extraordinary thing to make her excuse to me for writing a very fine hand: it had been much more excusable to be ashamed of the change in her style."

While the Queen was thus writing to the wife, the husband was gaining victories which covered his sovereign with glory: he thus writes:—

THE DUKE TO THE DUCHESS.

"Malplaquet, Sep. 11, 1709, N.S.

"I am obliged to you for the account you give me of the building of Blenheim, in yours of the 21st, and the further account you intend me, after the Duke and Duchess of Shrewsbury have seen what is done. You will see, by my former letters, as well as by this, that I can take pleasure in nothing as long as you continue uneasy, and think me unkind. I do assure you, upon my honour and salvation, that the only reason why I did not write was, that I am very sure it would have had no other effect than that of being shown to Mrs. Masham, by which she would have had an opportunity of turning it as she pleased; so that, when I shall speak to the Queen of their harsh behaviour to you, they would have been prepared. I beg you to be assured, that if ever I see the Queen, I shall speak to her just as you would have me, and that all the actions of my life shall make the Queen, as well as all the world, sensible that you are dearer to me than life, for I am fonder of my happiness than my own life, which I cannot enjoy, unless you are kind.

"Having written thus far, I have received intelligence that the French were on their march to attack us. We immediately got ourselves ready, and marched to a post at some distance from our camp. We came in presence between two and three o'clock yesterday, in the afternoon, but * * * only cannonaded each other.

"I am so tired, that I have but strength enough to tell you that we have had this day a very bloody battle: the first part of the day we beat their foot, and afterwards their horse.

"God Almighty be praised, it is now in our power to have what peace we please, and I may be pretty well assured of never being in another battle: but nothing in this world can make me happy, if you are not kind."

Soon after this happened the celebrated trial of the noted Dr. Sacheverell, on which occasion a scene occurred, which shows the petty schemes going on amongst the ladies of the court, to widen the breach between the Duchess and the Queen.

The Duchess thus draws the character and notices the career of this noisy and dangerous person:—

"The ministry, finding themselves perpetually abused from the pulpits as well as the press, resolved to attempt to put some stop to such insolence, by the impeachment and trial of Dr. Henry Sacheverell, for vilely abusing the late Revolution, and the glorious instrument of it; for insulting the administration, endeavouring to destroy the toleration, and proclaiming the danger of the Church, to alarm the people against their governors. All this was owned to be the design of the sermon for which he was impeached, both by his friends and his enemies, and boasted of by the former and by himself, before the trial; as he himself was rewarded for the attack in due time after it. The delay of the trial, and the unreasonable and pompous preparation for it, gave time enough to the new projectors to send about all their tools to raise hideous outcries, as if both Church and State were now attacked, and to scatter the notion, which did most mischief, of the Queen's own uneasiness, and the like.

"The poison spread itself incredibly. It was no very difficult matter for such cunning masters of mischief, with the help of all discontented Tories, Jacobites, and Papists, and indigent underworkmen, to put the nation into a very terrible ferment.

"Of the man himself no more need be said than that he had not one good quality that any man of sense ever valued him for. He once professed himself a great Whig. But King William dying, he thought best to change the torrent. It must be owned that a person more fitted for a tool could not have been picked out of the whole nation. For he had not learning enough to write or speak true English (as all his own compositions witness), but an heap of bombast, ill-connected words at command, which do excellently well with such as he was to move. * * * He had a haughty, insolent air, which his friends found occasion often to complain of; but it made his presence more graceful in public.

"His person was framed well for the purpose, and he dressed well. A good assurance, clean gloves, white handkerchief well managed, with other suitable accomplishments, moved the hearts of many at his appearance; and the solemnity of a trial added much to a pity and concern which had nothing in reason or justice to support them. The weaker part of the ladies were more like mad or bewitched than like persons in their senses.

"At length, by the help of proper affairs and tools, great mobs and tumults were raised, to whose outrages and violence nothing more conduced than a prevailing opinion, artfully spread among them, that one above was herself on the side of these disorders. Here there was a machine for the great projector to move; and it was so dexterously moved, that the whole nation was moved with it.

"Several eminent clergymen, who despised the man in their hearts, were engaged to stand publicly by him in the face of the world, as if the poor Church of England was now tried in him.

"A speech, exquisitely contrived to move pity., was put into his mouth, full of an impious piety, denying the greatest part of the charge (which the man had been known to boast of before) with solemn appeals to God, and such applications of Scripture as would make any serious person tremble. Every one immediately guessed the real author of it, from the manner of using Scripture so profanely, and from the frequent calling of God to witness what was known to be false. And perhaps there was but one man in England capable of making such a speech; and but one proud man of lowness of soul enough to descend to speak it. This speech was ready printed, contrary to all rule and decency, dispersed over the nation by himself, and had a great part in heightening our disorders.

"The sentence passed upon him could have been no punishment to any man but one who was full of his own excellences, and never thought himself so great as in a pulpit.

"Everybody knows that he was afterwards sent about several counties; where, with his usual grace, he received as his due the homage and adoration of multitudes: never thinking that respect enough was paid to his great merit, using some of his friends insolently, and raising mobs against his enemies, and giving ample proof of how great meanness the bulk of mankind is capable; putting on the air of a saint upon a lewd, drunken, pampered man, dispensing his blessings to all his worshippers, and his kisses to some; taking their good money as fast as it could be brought in, drinking their best wines, eating of their best provisions without reserve, and without temperance: and, what completed the farce, complaining, in the midst of this scene of luxury and triumph, as the old fat monk did over a hot venison pasty, in his barbarous Latin, 'Heu quanta patimus pro Ecclesia!' 'Oh! what dreadful things do we undergo for the sake of the Church!'"

The Queen was present in the court of the House of Lords at the trial of Sacheverell, placed in a box, before which a curtain was drawn, while the examinations were going on respecting the fanatic's conduct, which excited so undue an interest in the public mind, that it had become a fashion to attend the proceedings, and all the ladies of rank in the kingdom crowded to hear the sentence about to be delivered. The prosecution of Sacheverell had been recommended by the Duke of Marlborough, "lest he should preach him and his party out of the kingdom;" but it proved to be a bad measure, as it drew attention to a mischievous character, who might otherwise have sunk into contempt, as, in effect, he did afterwards, though at the time he obtained a triumph. The Duchess of Marlborough was obliged, by her office, to attend Queen Anne on this public occasion, while her royal mistress sat listening to the discussions, and she thus gives an account of what passed behind the curtain. In speaking of the new causes of offence, which were given by her inadvertently, she says :—

"This was at Dr. Sacheverell's trial,* where I waited on the Queen the first time she went thither ; and, having stood *above two hours,* said to the Vice-Chamberlain, that, when the Queen went to any place incognito, (as she came to the trial, and only looked from behind a curtain,) it was always the custom for the ladies to sit down before her ; but her Majesty had forgot to speak to us now : and that, since the trial was like to continue very long every day, I wished he would put the Queen in mind of it. To which he replied very naturally, 'Why, madam, should you not speak to the Queen yourself, who are always in waiting ?'

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* Sacheverell's offence was having delivered a discourse considered seditious and blasphemous, on the 5th Nov. 1709, at St. Paul's Cathedral, in which he decried the authors of the Revolution, abused the ministers of Queen Anne, and upheld the doctrine of divine right, which it was thought Anne herself entertained, and which accounted for the interest she took in the proceedings. This sermon was "an incoherent jumble," but was sufficient for the purposes of party, and he was thus raised into consequence to answer its ends.

"This I knew was right, and therefore I went up to the Queen, and stooping down to her, as she was sitting, to whisper to her, said, 'I believed her Majesty had forgotten to order us to sit, as was customary in such cases.' Upon this, she looked indeed as if she had forgot, and was sorry for it, and answered, in a very kind, easy way, 'By all means, pray sit;' and, before I could go a step from her chair, she called to Mr. Mordaunt, the page of honour, to bring stools, and desire the ladies to sit down, which accordingly we did—Lady Scarborough, Lady Burlington, and myself. But, as I was to sit nearest to the Queen, I took care to place myself at a good distance from her, though it was usual in such cases to sit close to her, and sometimes at the basset table, where she does not appear incognito; but in a place of ceremony the company has sat so near her as scarce to leave her room to put her hand to her pocket. Besides this, I used a further caution of showing her all the respect I could in this matter, by drawing the curtain behind me in such a manner, betwixt her and me, as to appear to be as it were in a different room from her Majesty. But my Lady Hyde, who stood behind the Queen when I went to speak to her, (and who, I observed, with an air of boldness more than good breeding, came up then nearer, to hear what I said,) continued to stand still in the same manner, and never came to sit with the rest of us that day, which I then took for nothing else but the making show of more than ordinary favour with the Queen.

"The next day the Duchess of Somerset came to the trial; and, before I sat down, I turned to her, having always used to show her a great deal of respect, and asked if her grace would not be pleased to sit: at which she gave a sort of start back, with the appearance of being surprised, as if she thought I had asked a very strange thing, and refused sitting. Upon this, I said it was always the custom to sit before the Queen in such cases, and that her Majesty had ordered us to do so the day before, but that her refusing it now looked as if she thought we had done something which was not proper. To which she only answered, that she did not care to sit; and then she went and stood behind the Queen, as Lady Hyde had done the day before, which I took no further notice of then, but sat down with my Lady Burlington, as we did before.

"But, when I came to reflect upon what these two ladies had done, I plainly perceived that, in the Duchess of Somerset especially, this conduct could not be thought the effect of humility, but that it must be a stratagem that they had formed in their cabal, to flatter the Queen by paying her more respect, and to make some public noise of this matter that might be to my disadvantage, or disagreeable to me. And this I was still the more confirmed in, because it had been known before that the Duchess of Somerset, who was there with her lord, was to act a cunning part between the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough. The Whigs and Tories did not intend to come to the trial.

"As, therefore, it was my business to keep all things as quiet as possible till the campaign was over, and preserve myself in the mean while, if I could, from any public affront, I resolved to do what I could to disappoint these ladies in their little design; and, in order to this, I waited upon the Queen next morning, before she went to the trial, and told her that I had observed the day before that the Duchess of Somerset had refused to sit, which I did not know the meaning of, since her Majesty was pleased to order it, and it was nothing more than what was agreeable to the constant practice of the court in such cases; but, however, if it would be in respects more pleasing to her Majesty that we should stand for the future, I begged she would let me know her mind about it, because I should be very sorry to do anything that could give her the least dissatisfaction. To this she answered, with more peevishness than was natural to her, in these words, 'If I had not liked you should sit, why should I have ordered it?'

"This plainly showed that the cabal had been *blowing her up*, but that she could not, however, contradict her own order. What she had now said was still a confirmation of it, and made it more difficult for the cabal to proceed any further in this matter; and therefore the next day the Duchess of Ormond and Lady Fretchville came to the trial, and, to my great surprise, sat down amongst the rest of us. And thus the matter ended; only that the Duchess of Somerset used some little arts afterwards, which are not worth mentioning, to *sweeten* me again, and cover her design, which I suppose now she was ashamed of."

The "cabal," however, succeeded; the Queen, a tool in the hands of others, by degrees gave up every appearance of regard to the duchess, or of gratitude to the duke. Lord Godolphin was dismissed from office, and the triumph of the adverse party was complete. The Duke of Marlborough, still fighting his country's battles and gaining immortal honours, was overwhelmed with unkindness and mortification at home, and might in vain exclaim, "Oh that I had wings like a dove, then would I flee away and be at rest!"

After seven-and-twenty years' service and professed friendship, the Queen emancipated herself from all obligations, and shook off the yoke which pressed too heavily on her mind, regardless of the confusion into which her weak compliance with interested persons cast the country.

It was now that all the malice which had been long repressed burst out, and poured forth its vengeance on the disgraced favourite. Swift employed his great talents to cover her with ridicule and obloquy. In the celebrated paper called the "Examiner," his unjust insinuations must have been even more galling than his abuse: he represents both the duke and duchess as extortioners and dissipators of the public money, insatiable in their avarice, and greedily swallowing all that they could get into their power, disposing of places, and seizing on rewards in a manner the most odious. Even those who did not believe these charges, or who knew them to be false, were not sorry to see the duchess humbled; and it is certainly no little merit to her that she should speak in terms so moderate as the following of the man who so cruelly attacked her. It is true that this was written many years afterwards, and that her "Vindication" had entirely confuted all he had advanced against her.

"1736. Swift.—Dean Swift gives the most exact account of kings, ministers, bishops, and the courts of justice, that is possible to be writ. He has certainly a vast deal of wit; and since he could contribute so much to the pulling down the most honest and best-intentioned ministry that ever I knew, with the help only of Abigail and one or two more, and has certainly stopt the finishing stroke to ruin the Irish in the project of the halfpence, in spite of all the ministry could do, I cannot help wishing that we had had his assistance in the opposition; for I would easily forgive him all the slaps he has given me and the Duke of Marlbro', and have thanked him heartily whenever he would please to do good. I never saw him in my life; and though his writings have entertained me very much, yet I see he writes sometimes for interest: for in his books he gives my Lord Oxford as great a character as if he was speaking of Socrates or Marcus Antonius. But, when I am dead, the reverse of that character will come out, with vouchers to it, under his own hand."

"1736. The style of the Lords' address puts me in mind of Dean Swift's account, *who I am prodigiously fond of*, which he gives of the manner in which he was introduced to the King of Luggnag."

"1736. I most heartily wish that in this park I had some of the breed of those charming creatures Swift speaks of, and calls the Hounhyhms, which I understand to be horses so extremely polite, and which had all manner of good conversation, good principles, and that never told a lie, and charmed him so that he could not endure his own country when he returned. * * * I really have not been so much pleased a long time as with what he writes."

The duchess was less indulgent to Prior, who was equally concerned in vilifying her, yet who thus writes to the Duke of Marlborough, hoping to ward off his indignation :—

"Westminster, Nov. 16, 1708.

"My Lord,

"I have been at your Grace's levee, among the many who pay their general compliment to you, but had not the good fortune to approach near enough. I therefore take this opportunity of your being a little alone, to congratulate your safe arrival in England, and of wishing you may find here all those grateful returns which the glory of your arms, and particularly of the last campaign, may deserve.

"I assure myself that I continue in your Grace's favour, and in that assurance, I place the welfare of my life; but one of those things which would make life much easier to me than it is at present is my being released from the fear of lying under my Lady Duchess's displeasure. I believe some of your Grace's friends will trouble you in my behalf, that, by your kindness to me I may be restored to the commission, in which there is now a vacancy, or sent to Florence, or where else your commands may dispose of me, and that, too, at such a time as you may think proper. But, in my own person I may say what I most desire is, that I may have the liberty of laying myself at my Lady Duchess's feet, and of begging her to hear me demonstrate my innocence as to anything that might have offended her, and to accept my service in whatever may hereafter oblige her; in one word, my Lord, to show her Grace the contents of this letter. I have lost my employment after sixteen years' service—fare it well. I still subsist, God Almighty bless your goodness and bounty for it. I desire no more of my Lady Duchess than that she would not think me a villain and a libeller. I beg no other *éclaircissement* of what is past than that she would forget it; and with the most solemn protestations I aver that I have ever esteemed her as one of the best of women, and would justify that esteem with my life, which at present is no great compliment, for, in truth, I grow pretty weary of it. Your Grace will be pleased to indulge this request to the most unhappy, but the most faithful of your servants,

"MAT. PRIOR."

The comments of the duchess on this letter are severe:—

"The duke, indeed," she says, "had so particularly regarded him as to procure him a pension of five hundred pounds a-year, after he was removed from being one of the commissioners for trade; and he had made more submissive court to the duke and duchess than almost any other.

"But when their enemies opened the scene he immediately joined them, and made the vilest returns to him to whom he had long owed his very subsistence. But it is enough to say, that the first part of his education was in a tavern, and that he had a soul as low as his education, incapable of anything truly great or honorable. * * *

"It was thought, with good reason, that he wrote some of those vile 'Examiners' in which the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough were so beyond all measure and all example abused. Nay, before this, the duchess thought she had good reason to think him the author of a vile libel against herself. And, notwithstanding all his submissions and all his protestations (of which he was very free) she continued still to think so."

The Queen, obstinately oblivious of all the past, overjoyed to find herself at liberty, wrote, with her own hand, the dismissal of the duchess, and gave herself up to her enemies.

"Thus," says the duchess, at the close of her "Vindication," "I have given a short history of my favour with my royal mistress, from its earliest rise to its irrecoverable fall. You have seen, with admiration, how sincere and how great an affection the Queen was capable of having for a servant who never flattered her. And I doubt not but your friendship made some conclusions to my advantage, when you observed for how many years I was able to hold my place in her regard, notwithstanding her most real and invariable passion for that phantom which she called the Church—that darling phantom, which the Tories were for ever presenting to her imagination, and employing as a will-o'-the-wisp, to bewilder her mind, and entice her (as she at last unhappily experienced) to the destruction of her quiet and glory. But, I believe you have thought that the most extraordinary thing in the whole fortune of my favour, was its being at last destroyed by a cause in appearance so unequal to the effect—Mrs. Abigail Hill. For I will venture to affirm, that whatever may have been laid to my charge of ill behaviour to my mistress, in the latter years of my service, is all reducible to this one crime—my inveteracy to Mrs. Masham. I have indeed said, that my constant combating the Queen's inclination to the Tories did, in the end, prove the ruin of my credit with her: and this is true, inasmuch as without that her Majesty could never have been engaged to any insinuations against me."

The duchess retired from her once exalted place at court to her residence at Holywell House, St. Albans, where she lived in a style of great magnificence.

She thus expresses her sentiments at this period:—

"After what has passed, I do solemnly protest, that if it were in my power I would not be a favourite, which few will believe; and since I shall never be able to give any demonstration of that truth, I had as good say no more of it. But as fond as people are of power, I fancy that anybody that had been shut up so many tedious hours as I have been with a person that had no conversation, and yet must be treated with respect, would feel something of what I did, and be very glad, when their circumstances did not want it, to be freed from such a slavery, which must be uneasy at all times, though I do protest, that upon the account of her loving me, and trusting me so entirely as she did, I had a concern for her, which is more than you will easily believe, and I would have served her with the hazard of my life upon any occasion; but after she put me at liberty, by using me ill, I was very easy, and liked better that anybody should have her favour than myself at the price of flattery, without which, I believe nobody can be well with a king or queen, unless the world should come to be less corrupt or they wiser than any I have seen since I was born."

And now, the long wished-for time had at length arrived when Marlborough, worn out with his glorious struggles, and harassed by political intrigue, was free to retire into private life, and enjoy the society of those so dear to him, from whom he had for so many years been separated. But alas! long-cherished desires generally, in this life, end in disappointment; and quiet happiness was destined never to be the portion of the generous, feeling, and kind-hearted general. His wife was a woman thwarted in all her designs, outraged, injured, mortified, and disgusted with the court and with the world; she was no longer young, nor possessed of the extraordinary beauty which had formerly thrown a veil even over the deformities of her temper, which, always violent, had now become soured by adversity. She had no indulgence left for others, was "extreme to mark what is done amiss," dissatisfied with her friends, her children, and everything about her, and disposed to wrangle and dispute on the slightest provocation.

If the anecdote is to be credited which is related of her during the duke's last illness, she had indeed so given way to her temper that it had at length become ungovernable.

Dr. Mead, the celebrated physician, had given some advice which she did not approve, upon which she attacked him furiously, *swore* at him with a bitterness quite indescribable, and followed him, as he retreated from her room, with the intention of *pulling off his periwig!* Dr. Hoadley, Bishop of Winchester, is said to have been a witness of this indecorous scene.

The disposition of Marlborough himself was a great contrast to that of his fiery duchess. His character has been thus given :—

> "He was, in his private life, remarkable for an easiness of behaviour which gave an inimitable propriety to everything he said and did, a calmness of temper no accident could move: a temperance in all things which neither a court life nor court favours could corrupt. A great tenderness for his family, a most sincere attachment to his friends, and a strong sense of religion without any tincture of bigotry."

Many anecdotes are told of his remarkable patience, a quality in which the duchess by no means shared.

Riding one day with Mr. Commissary Mariot, the duke was overtaken by a shower of rain. The commissary called for and obtained his cloak from his servant, who was on horseback behind him. The duke also asked for his cloak several times, but without avail, his servant delaying to bring it; when at length he came, he was awkwardly endeavouring to fasten it, and muttered sulkily, "You must stay, if it rains cats and dogs, till I get at it." The duke, instead of getting angry, turned to the commissary and remarked, "I would not be of that fellow's temper for the world."

He was noble in his sentiments, and above indulging in suspicion, relying firmly on his friends, and judging of others by his own upright heart.

When the great duke, who had swayed the destinies of Europe for so long, was once in retirement, it became indiscreet for those who wished to be well with the reigning ministers to pay attention to him; but Prince Eugene, his great brother in arms, who visited England in 1712, would not be deterred by any considerations from paying his respects to a man and a general whom he so much esteemed. When the prince was entertained by Harley, that minister declared that the day so honoured was the happiest of his life, since he saw the greatest general of the age in his house. Eugene wittily answered, "that if it were so, he was obliged to his lordship for it," alluding of course to Harley's dismissal of Marlborough from his command of the army.

But, in spite of his extraordinary quality of patience, the duke was at last irritated by the insults of his unworthy foes into an act which might have brought with it very serious consequences. Lord Paulet, in a debate in the House of Lords, ventured to describe him as "a certain general who led his troops to the slaughter, to cause a great number of officers to be knocked on the head in a battle, or against stone walls, in order that he might dispose of their commissions." This was too much to endure, and a challenge from the hero of so many fights ensued, but the meeting was fortunately prevented by the interposition of the Secretary of State, and by the command of the Queen.

A great affliction overtook both the duke and duchess, which was, perhaps, more sensibly felt by them than either the unkindness of the Queen, or the virulence of their enemies. This was the death of their long-tried, attached, and amiable friend, Lord Godolphin, who had himself experienced the mutability of fortune, the uncertainty of court favour, and the ingratitude of the great. In her "Characters of her Contemporaries," by the duchess, she thus mentions him :—

"Lord Godolphin had conducted the Queen with the care and tenderness of a father, or a guardian, through a state of helpless ignorance, and had faithfully served her in all her difficulties before she was Queen, as well as greatly contributed to the glories she had to boast of after she was so. But there was no sense left now of such matters, nor any memory of those past services which she had used to think invaluable, a long series of services, perhaps the most disinterested that were ever performed by any prime minister to any prince upon earth.

"He was a man of few words, but of a remarkable thoughtfulness and sedateness of temper; of great application to business, and of such despatch in it as to give pleasure to those who attended him upon any affair. Of wonderful frugality in the public concerns, but of no great carefulness about his own. He affected being useful without popularity; and the inconsiderable sum of money, above his paternal estate, which he left at his death, showed that he had been indeed the nation's treasurer, and not his own, and effectually confuted the vile calumnies of his enemies and successors."

The death of this dear friend cast so great a gloom over those by whom he was so much esteemed, that their ungrateful country no longer offered any charms for them, and all the visions which, in the midst of his trials and dangers, had delighted and comforted the mind of Marlborough disappeared at once. He had now leisure, he was now the companion of the wife he adored, the master of wealth and great possessions; he saw splendid fabrics rising around him, and rank, glory, and well-earned honour his own: but he was the mark of envy, hatred, and jealousy; his enemies had triumphed, his Queen was cold and unjust, and, worse than all, his cherished friend, the confidant of his sorrows, the sharer of his cares, his consoler and encourager, was no more, and all appeared a blank in his existence.

Every step that he and the duchess took was regarded with a jealous eye, the most simple action was construed into a fault; suspicion, severity, injustice, and mean misrepresentation pursued them into the depth of their retreat, and Woodstock had no bowers secure enough to keep out the legion of harpies who lay in wait to attack them.

This was "hard fare" for the greatest hero of the age; but Queen Anne—

> "So gentle, mild, and good,
> Cried—Is he gone?—'tis time he should;"

for when it was told her that both he and the duchess had left England, her only remark was, "The Duke of Marlborough has done wisely to go abroad."

His request to see the Queen before he departed was refused; and she never again saw her faithful servant, or the woman for whom she once professed so strong an attachment. In October, 1712, the duke sailed from Dover to Ostend, and in a few months afterwards his wife followed him, she having remained behind to arrange his and her own affairs. She joined him at Maestricht, from whence they went to Aix-la-Chapelle. The duke was at this time sixty-two years of age, and the duchess in her fifty-second year; a period when they might both have reasonably expected to have enjoyed the remainder of their days in quiet.

While at Frankfort, where they took up their abode, they had the satisfaction of hearing from those friends who were really attached to them, what was going on in the great world they had just quitted, but except occasionally, there was nothing very exhilarating in the accounts from home. The duchess's favourite friend and correspondent, Arthur Maynwaring, whose letters are written with infinite wit and spirit, too soon followed Lord Godolphin to the grave, to the extreme regret of the duke and herself.* Lady Mohun writes thus of literary and other events:—

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* Mr. Maynwaring was originally a zealous Jacobite, though he afterwards changed his opinions. He lived much in the literary society of Paris, and on his return was made one of the Commissioners of Customs, and afterwards appointed by Lord Godolphin Auditor of the Impress. He was the firm and confidential friend of the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough, and never withheld his advice when needed. The misfortune of his life was a connexion with the celebrated Mrs. Oldfield, to whom he was so deeply attached, that no persuasions could induce him to relinquish her society, though she herself, returning his affection, desired for his own good that they should separate. On his death, which happened in consequence of a cold caught while walking late with the duchess in the gardens of Holywell House, he left his personal property, and a patrimonial estate, between Mrs. Oldfield and his sister. The duchess lost a sincere friend in him, for he never scrupled to advise her well. In one of his letters, he says, on occasion of her talking of going abroad to join the duke:—

LADY MOHUN* TO THE DUCHESS.

"London, April 24, 1713.

"What now seems to possess everybody's mind is a new tragedy called Cato, of which I suppose you have had a better account than I am capable of giving had I seen it: but it is so generally approved, that the poetry must bear some proportion to the glorious subject. The cause is liberty: the character the Duke of Marlborough, as near as one great, wise, and virtuous man can be compared to another. The time only makes a difference, but the great design is the same, only the opposition not so scandalous, though perhaps as ruinous, for here we can naturally produce a Cato: but I doubt they cannot find a Cæsar except for his vices. Heaven for ever preserve our dear Cato, or public ruin will make every private person's case as precarious as mine."

"What the temper of the Queen is God knows, I am sure I don't, but Lady Marlborough is certainly of a forgiving nature, and not hard to be reconciled. I most humbly beg pardon for taking this liberty, but I should not deserve to be your Grace's secretary if I had not written all this, which I think so right and reasonable. It was a common saying among the Heathens, such as your friend Seneca was, whom you mention, that the wise man hates nobody, and only loves the virtuous; and I verily believe she comes up at least to the first part of their character of a wise man," &c.

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* Elizabeth, daughter of Dr. Thomas Laurence, and second wife of Charles, last Lord Mohun, who was killed in a duel with the Duke of Hamilton, Nov. 15, 1712.

"London, April 24th, 1713.

"I am not at all surprised at the honour you express by the visit of a great man, for I hear they have at least the appearance of humanity abroad, and a seeming regard for virtue everywhere but here. Why should it be wonderful to see respect where it is so justly due? Is there, without flattery, such another man, or was there ever such another instance of baseness and black ingratitude mixed with such unaccountable folly and madness? You have read the play of Cato. The conclusion of the Elector's discourse puts me in mind of the scene between the two brothers.

'Oh! Portius, is there not some chosen curse,
Some hidden thunder in the store of Heaven
Red with uncommon wrath, to blast the man
That owes his greatness to his country's ruin?'

"I think one might better say his ill-gotten power rather than his greatness. I should never be weary of applications if I were not afraid of tiring you, but this I cannot forbear:—

'When vice prevails, and impious men bear sway,
The post of honour is a private station.'

"'Tis pity this is true, and that the innocent must suffer for the guilty."

Little that was reassuring reached the Duke of Marlborough, in his foreign retreat, relative to public news. The present policy of the ministers of Queen Anne seemed likely to destroy all that his labours had effected during a long life of toil and danger, and the sacrifice of thousands of lives had gained no advantage which the malice of his enemies could not undo.

The friendly relations which were brought about between France and England threatened to change the face of things, and the Queen's evident and capricious partiality for her brother, whom she had formerly disowned, caused great apprehension in the minds of those who dreaded a Catholic succession. The Queen's infirmities were increasing, and with them the weakness of her intellect became more apparent: she was continually harassed with doubts as to the justice of excluding her father's son from the succession, and as Somerville observes:—

> "Every new application to the Queen concerning her successor was a knell to her heart."

In this, though in nothing else, she resembled her great predecessor Elizabeth, thus proving that the powerful and the weak are nearly equal when not guided by principle. Anne, whether remorseful for her conduct to her great favourite, or from late discovery that princes have few friends, had become more than usually suspicious and tenacious of that authority, the sweets of which she had not long enjoyed, and which her conduct showed she was unworthy to possess. She dreaded being thought under the influence of those about her, and to prove her independence, frequently thwarted and denied the petitions of all who applied to her in full confidence of her favour.

The Duchess of Somerset is accused by the duchess, in a letter to Mr. Hutchinson, of misrepresenting her to the Queen whenever an opportunity occurred, so that, though she was absent, her enemies contrived always to present her to her former friend in the least agreeable colours. The Duchess of Somerset, at this time, was contending for sway over their weak mistress, with the Abigail who had been so successful in ruining the Duchess of Marlborough.

"There was one thing more that happened about this time, in which the Duchess of Somerset was particularly concerned, and which was turned to a very malicious story against me. The case was this. At the christening of the child of Mr. Merydith's, in which the Duchess of Somerset was to stand godmother with me, I was pressed very much to give the name, which it was properly her place to do, and upon that account I refused it; till at last, to end the dispute, it was agreed by all that the child was to have the Queen's name. After this had been settled, I turned to the Duchess of Somerset, and said to her, in a smiling way, that 'the Duke of Hamilton had made a boy a girl, and christened it Anne, and why should not we make this girl a boy, and call it George?'

"This was then understood to be meant no otherwise than a jest upon the Duke of Hamilton, as it plainly was, and the Duchess of Somerset laughed at it, as the Queen herself I dare say would have done, if she had happened to be present. But this, as I had it afterwards from very good hands, was represented to the Queen in as different and false a way as possible, who was told that I said: 'Don't let the name of the child be Anne, for there never was one good of that name.'

"I leave you to judge who was the most likely to give this story this ridiculous turn; and who was to find their account in it.

"When some such stories as those had made a great noise in the world, and all my friends were much offended at the baseness of this way of proceeding against me, in order to make a greater breach betwixt the Queen and me, I remember particularly Mrs. Darcey, falling upon that subject, I suppose accidentally, would needs persuade me to try and set all things right again with the Queen, by clearing up some of the false stories which had been made of me to her, of disrespectful things I was said to have spoke of her, several of which she repeated to me, and said she was sure the Queen had been told of them. There were some of them nothing else but what are properly called Grub-street stories; and therefore, as it was with some reluctancy that she had brought me to talk so much upon this subject, so I had still less inclination to engage in the defence of myself about these matters."

At last, Harley and Abigail disagreeing, a new disturbance broke out at court, and the declining Queen suffered every kind of vexation and annoyance from the fierce disputes which ensued between 'the Dragon,' as the minister was called in derision, and the supplanter of the Duchess of Marlborough.

The quarrels of Whigs and Tories now became more than ever vehement and furious, and though the indisposition of the Queen was regarded with dismay by all parties, it was not from love to her, but from fear of what might happen against their interests should she die.

"The least disorder the Queen has," writes Swift to Lord Peterborough, "puts us all in alarm, and when it is over, we act as if she were immortal."

Harley and Bolingbroke, the latter now a staunch friend of Lady Masham, publicly and privately abused each other in the most bitter manner, torturing their royal mistress in a manner disgraceful and unbecoming in the extreme.

"Never was sleep," says Dr. Arbuthnot to Swift, "more welcome to a weary traveller than death to the Queen. It was frequently her lot, while worn with bodily suffering, to be an agitated and helpless witness of the bitter altercations of the Lord Treasurer Harley and of her Secretary for Foreign Affairs. It was her office good-naturedly to check the sneers of the former, and to soothe the indignant spirit of Bolingbroke. In their mutual disputes, they addressed to each other such language as only cabinet ministers could use with impunity. Yet the Dragon held fast with a dead grip the little machine; or, in other words, clung to the Treasurer's staff."

In this state of affairs, both parties, finding their divisions fatal to their interests, turned their eyes towards the banished pair who had once ably directed the state. The Duke of Marlborough was applied to by each, and his influence solicited to sustain their failing power, but, steady to their principles, both the duke and duchess refused to trust those who had once betrayed them, or to give up the course of duty which they had conscientiously adopted.

At the critical moment, when the claims of her son were about to be decided, the Electress Sophia, whose anxious wish had always been to have the title of Queen of England engraved on her tomb, died, two months before such a consummation could be effected.

Harley was dismissed from office with ignominy, for such the Queen's words heaped on him when she said, in explanation of the act, to the Lords of the Privy Council, that she dismissed him for his want of truth and punctuality, and the "bad manners, indecency, and disrespect," with which he had been accustomed to treat her.

The end was now about to arrive of the "fitful fever" in which Queen Anne had passed her life. It is thus recorded:*

"On Thursday, the 29th of July, the Cabinet Council were to have met again, but the Queen had then sunk into a state of stupor, which was relieved by cupping, an operation which she preferred to the ordinary mode of bleeding. Her physician, Dr. Shadwell, declared that recent agitation had driven the gout to her head. Her case was now considered almost hopeless, and the council was deferred: yet, her Majesty appearing to be relieved by the operation she had undergone, hope again revived. On the ensuing evening she rested well, rose with an impetus of vigour sometimes given to the departing spirit, and after attending to some duties of the toilet, looked earnestly upon a clock which stood in the room. One of her bedchamber women, observing that her gaze was fixed, asked her Majesty 'what she saw in the clock more than usual.' The Queen answered her not, but turning her head towards her, the affrighted attendant saw death written on her countenance. She was again bled, and again she revived.

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* Mrs. Thomson's Life.

"Meantime the Privy Council assembled at the Cockpit were apprised, through the Duchess of Ormond, of her Majesty's condition. The memorable scene which ensued has been often told. The ministers immediately adjourned to Kensington, and the physicians being consulted, and having declared that their sovereign was still sensible, she was recommended, by the unanimous voice of the council, to appoint the Duke of Shrewsbury Lord Treasurer. Anne, expiring, summoned strength to approve this choice, and to place the Treasurer's staff in the hands of the duke, begging him to use it for the good of her people. After this effort she sunk unmolested into her last slumber.

"The herald at arms and a troop of the life-guards were in readiness to mount twenty-four hours before the Queen's death, to proclaim the Elector of Hanover King of England, so great was the apprehension of the Pretender. After this even, and when despatches had been sent to the Elector of Hanover, the Queen's pulse became stronger, she began to take nourishment, and many around her entertained hopes. But this," says her historian, "was but the flash of a dying light. The Bishop of London, in vain, stood by ready to administer the Sacrament, which she never revived sufficiently to receive.

"She died without signing the draught of her will, in which bequests were made to her servants. By this informality Lady Masham, Dr. Arbuthnot, her physician, and others, were deprived of legacies."

The Duke and Duchess of Marlborough were on their way to England when the Queen's death occurred. They arrived, in fact, at Ostend the very day before the event, anxiously expected by that party which most relied on gaining his influence. The duchess writes to her friend, Mrs. Clayton, thus:—

"July 30, 1714.

"I am sure my dear friend will be glad to hear that we are come well to this place, where we wait for a fair wind, and, in the meantime, are in a very clean house, and have every thing good but water. It is not to be told in this letter the respect and affection shown to the Duke of Marlborough in every place where he goes, which always makes me remember our governors in the manner that is natural to do: and upon this journey one thing has happened that was surprising and very pretty. The Duke of Marlborough contrived so as to avoid going into the great towns as well as he could, and for that reason went a little out of the way not to go through Ghent; but the chief magistrates, hearing he was to pass, met him upon the road, and had prepared a very handsome breakfast for all that was with us, in a little village where one of their ladies staid to do the honours; and there was in the company a considerable churchman that was lame and had not been out of his room for a great while, but would give himself this trouble. This is to show you how the Roman Catholics love those that have served them well. Among the governors of that town there were a great many officers that came out with them on foot; and I was so much surprised and touched at their kindness, that I could not speak to the officers without a good deal of concern, saying I was sorry for what they did, fearing it might hurt them; to which they replied, very politically or ignorantly, I don't know which, sure it was not possible for them to suffer for having done their duty.

"The next day Mr. Sutton met us, with other officers, and did a great many civilities in bringing wine, and very good fruits; but I was not so much surprised at that, because he is so well with the ministers, he may do what he pleases. The Duke of Marlborough is determined to stay here till he has a very fair wind and good weather; and not to be at London till three or four days after he lands at Dover, because we have so many horses and servants, that we can't travel fast."

The news that met the returned exiles, on landing at Dover, after a stormy passage, was, that the Queen was dead. Their arrival was a triumph: the dignitaries of the town receiving them with little less than royal honours, and the people exultingly welcoming their great general back again. But, even at the threshold he was doomed to experience disappointment; for on his progress towards London, he learnt that his name was not included in the list of noblemen appointed to form the regency. This was attributed to pique on the part of the father of George I., whom Marlborough had displeased by some former want of confidence relative to the affairs of the army, or else by his supposed friendliness towards the Stuarts.

Their journey, however, was not arrested, and fresh marks of respect and regard from their friends and the people attended them everywhere. At Southwark two hundred gentlemen on horseback came to meet the duke, and a numerous band of friends and relations, some in coaches and six, swelled the still increasing procession, which was preceded by the city volunteers. In this state Marlborough proceeded to St. James's, amidst acclamations of "Long live King George—long live the Duke of Marlborough!"

The duke was visited, immediately on his arrival in London, by the foreign ministers, and by most of the nobility and gentry. He was sworn of the Privy Council, and once again appeared in the House of Lords. When parliament was prorogued, he retired to his house at Holywell, disgusted with the policy which had excluded him from the regency. The duchess, anxious to save him from further mortification, entreated him for the future to resign the cares of public life altogether.

"I begged," she says, "of the Duke of Marlborough, on my knees, that he would never accept any employment. I said every body that liked the Revolution, and the security of the law, had a great esteem for him; that he had a greater fortune than he wanted, and that a man who had had such success, with such an estate, would be of more use to any court than they could be to him; that I would live civilly with them if they were so to me, but would never put it in the power of any King to use me ill. He was entirely of this opinion, and determined to quit all, and serve them only when he could act honestly, and do his country service at the same time."

George I. arrived in England six weeks after the death of Queen Anne, and his first act was to distinguish the illustrious general, to whom his adopted country owed so much, by all the attention in his power. He restored him at once to his station as captain-general of the land forces, appointed him colonel of the first regiment of foot-guards, and master-general of the ordnance.

Dr. Arbuthnot remarks, that "it was worth living to seventy-three, to see the changes in this strange medley of events in the world." It would have been wiser in the Duke of Marlborough to have kept the promise he made to his better-judging wife, and not have accepted office; for, as she foresaw, it involved him in some troubles, and did not regain for him his former political importance.

On the whole, however, the duke was happy in his retreat at Holywell, surrounded by his children and grandchildren, and at that time in good health, riding and walking, and enjoying country pleasures, and the splendours of Blenheim, which was rising in all its glories. His evenings were tranquilly passed in receiving his friends, and indulging in his favourite games of whist and ombre. But the duchess, whose active mind could never be content without scheming, occupied her leisure in arranging the marriage of her grand-daughter with the Duke of Newcastle, and in quarrelling with Sir John Vanbrugh the dramatist, and the architect of Blenheim. It is true that she kept her differences with the eccentric and violent artist a secret from the duke as long as possible, till, on his observing that Sir John had absented himself altogether from their society, she was obliged to confess that they were at variance; and probably then showed him all or some of the letters which had passed between them, on the occasion of her withdrawing her confidence from her former friend and favourite; and also of having placed in the hands of another architect the task of finishing Blenheim.

When the irritable architect first found that he had fallen under the displeasure of his great patroness, he wrote to her a letter, somewhat indignant but still respectful, to which she replied temperately enough; but without waiting for her answer to his first missive, Sir John had sent off another of a quite opposite character, insolent and coarse in the extreme, as soon as he discovered for certain that Blenheim was taken out of his hands.

The duchess received this angry epistle just as she was sending off her answer to his first, and added a postscript not unlike in style to his own: which she concludes with this remark:—

"Upon the receiving of that very insolent letter, upon the eighth of the same month, 'tis easy to imagine that I wished to have had the civility I expressed in the letter back again, and was very sorry I had *fouled my fingers* in writing to such a fellow."

This is the letter of Sir John Vanbrugh, which called forth such a comment.

"Whitehall, Nov. 8, 1716.

"Madam,

"When I writ to your Grace on Thursday last, I was much at a loss what could be the ground of your having dropped me, in the service I had been endeavouring to do you and your family with the Duke of Newcastle, upon your own sole motion and desire.* But having since been shown by Mr. Richards, a large packet of building papers sent him by your Grace, I find the reason was, that you had resolved to use me so ill in respect of Blenheim, as must make it impracticable to employ me in any other branch of your service.

"These papers, Madam, are so full of far-fetched, laboured accusations, mistaken facts, wrong inferences, groundless jealousies and strained constructions, that I should put a very great affront on your understanding, if I supposed it possible you could mean anything in earnest by them, but to put a stop to my troubling you any more. You have your end, Madam, for I will never trouble you more, unless the Duke of Marlborough recovers so far as to shelter me from such intolerable treatment.

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* He had long been negotiating the marriage with Lady Harriet Godolphin and the Duke of Newcastle, being a mutual friend of both parties.

"I shall, in the mean time, have only this concern on his account, (for whom I shall ever retain the greatest veneration,) that your Grace having, like the Queen, thought fit to get rid of a faithful servant, the Tories will have the pleasure of seeing your glassmaker, Moor, make just such an end of the duke's building, as her minister Harley did of his victories, for which it was erected.

"I am your Grace's
Most obedient servant,
J. VANBRUGH.

"If your Grace will give me leave to print your papers, I'll do it very exactly, and without any answer or remark, but this short letter attached to the tail of them, that the world may know I desired they might be published."

But all these petty vexations were at once swept away by a real misfortune which overtook the duke and duchess, in the loss of their two favourite daughters; for the death of one quickly followed that of the other. Elizabeth, Countess of Bridgewater, the affectionate, dutiful, and pious, was snatched from them by that fatal scourge, the small-pox, which had carried off her brother: she died March 22, 1716, at the age of twenty-six.

Anne, Countess of Sunderland, was still more beloved by her parents than her sister had been: she was as amiable, as beautiful, and the especial favourite of her doting father. Though married to a man who coldly returned her affection, she was a most devoted wife, and a tender and judicious mother. She died on the 15th of April, 1716, of a fever, to the inexpressible grief of her father and mother. A letter from the countess to her husband, "not to be given to him till after her death," proves the amiability of her disposition. She thus expresses herself:—

"I have always found it so tender a subject (to you, my dear) to talk of my dying, that I have rather chose to leave my mind in writing, which though very, very insignificant, is some ease to me. Your dear self and the dear children are my only concern in the world: I hope in God you will find comfort for the loss of a wife I am sure you loved so well, not to want a great deal: I would be no further remembered than what would contribute to your ease, which is to be careful (as I was) not to make your circumstances uneasy by living beyond what you have, which I could not, with all the care that was possible, quite prevent. When you have any addition, think of your poor children, and that you have not an estate to live on, without making some addition by saving. You will ever be miserable if you give way to the love of play.

"As to the children, pray get my mother, the Duchess of Marlborough, to take care of the girls, and if I leave any boys too little to go to school, for to be left to servants is very bad for children, and a man can't take the care of little children that a woman can. For the love that she has for me, and the duty that I have ever shown her, I hope she will do it, and be ever kind to you, who was dearer to me than my life.

"Pray take care to see the children married with a prospect of happiness, for in that you will show your kindness to me; and never let them want education or money while they are young. My father has been so kind as to give my children fortunes, so that I hope they won't miss the opportunity of being settled in the world for want of portions. But your own daughter may want your help, which I hope you will think to give her, though it should straiten your income, or to any of mine should they want it.

"Pray let Mr. Fourneaux get some good-natured man for Lord Spencer's governor, whom he may settle with him before he dies, and be fit to go abroad with him. I beg of you to spare no expense to improve him, and to let him have an allowance for his pocket to make him easy. You have had five thousand pounds of the money you know was mine, which my mother gave me yearly: whenever you can, let him have the income of that for his allowance, if he has none any other way. And don't be as careless of the dear children as when you relied upon me to take care of them; but let them be your care, though you should marry again; for your wife may wrong them when you don't mind it.

"You owe Fanchon, by a bond, twelve hundred pounds, for which I gave her fourscore pounds a-year interest. Pray, whenever it is in your power, be kind to her and to her children, for she was ever faithful to me. Pray burn all my letters in town or country. We must all die, but it is hard to part with one so much beloved, and in whom there was so much happiness as you, my dearest, ever were to me. My last prayers shall be to the Almighty, to give you all blessings in this world, and grant that we may meet happy in the next.

"A. SUNDERLAND.

"Pray give Lady Anne my diamond earrings, the middle drops are my mother's: and give Dye my pearl necklace and watch; and give Lady Frances Spencer my diamond buckle; and give Mr. Fourneaux the medal of gold which you gave me when I was married, and the little picture I have of your's and Lord Spencer's."

This touching appeal was immediately forwarded by the widower to the Duchess of Marlborough, who instantly accepted the important charges consigned to her by her daughter: her answer is as follows:—

"I send you enclosed that most precious letter you sent me yesterday by Mr. Charlton. You will easily believe it has made me drop a great many tears; and you may be very sure that to my life's end I shall observe very religiously all that my poor dear child desired. I was pleased to find that my own inclinations had led me to resolve upon doing everything that she mentions, before I knew it was her request, except taking Lady Anne, which I did not offer, thinking, that as you take Lady Frances home, who is eighteen years old, she would be better with you than with me, as long as you live, or with the servants that her dear mother chose to put about her, and I found, by Mr. Charlton, this thought was the same that you had. But I will be of all the use I can to her in every thing that she wants me; and if I should happen to live longer than you, though so much older, I will then take as much care of her as if she were my own child. I have resolved to take poor Lady Anne Egerton, who, I believe, is very ill looked after. She went yesterday to Ashridge; but I will send for her to St. Albans, as soon as you will let me have dear Lady Dye; and while the weather is hot, I will keep them two and Lady Harriot, with a little family of servants to look after them, and be there as much as I can: but the Duke of Marlborough will be running up and down to several places this summer, where one can't carry children, and I don't think his health is so good as to trust him by himself.

"I should be glad to talk to Mr. Fourneaux, to know what servants there are of my dear child's that you do not intend to keep, that, if there is any of them that can be of use in this new addition to my family, I may take them, for several reasons.

"I desire, when it is easy to you, that you will let me have some little trifle that my dear child used to wear in her pocket, or in any other way; and I desire Fanchon will look for some little cup she used to drink in. I had some of her hair not long since, that I asked her for, but Fanchon may give me a better lock at the full length."

This little family of grandchildren were the delight of the duke and duchess; and it was with extreme enjoyment that the former listened to his own praises, lisped out by several of them in the dramas got up to compliment him at Holywell House. These quiet pleasures were again interrupted by political events: the trial of Lord Oxford, who had been imprisoned two years in the Tower, brought forth many slumbering recollections and vexations, and threatened to involve the duke in a series of annoyances, relative to his former indulgence towards the exiled Stuarts. The dangerous South Sea scheme next disturbed his tranquillity; and but for the strength of mind and judgment of the duchess, he would probably have been led, like many others, into fatal confidence. Though she owed little to education, and mathematics and logic formed no part of her knowledge, though to arithmetic, as a science, she was a stranger, yet her acuteness served her as well as if she had been the greatest proficient, and showed her the fallacy of that which had at the commencement deluded her, and had ruined half the kingdom. It is related that—

"Lady Bute sat by the duchess sometimes while she dined, or watched her in the curious process of casting up her accounts,—curious, because her Grace, well versed as she was in all matters relating to money, such as getting it, hoarding it, and turning it to the best advantage, knew nothing of common arithmetic. But her sound, clear head could invent an arithmetic of its own. To lookers on it appeared as if a child had scribbled over the paper, setting down figures here and there at random; and yet every sum came right, to a fraction at last, in defiance of Cocker."*

It was in May 1716, not two months after the death of his favourite daughter Anne, that the Duke of Marlborough was attacked with palsy, which for some time deprived him of speech and recollection. He visited Bath, and regained in some degree his former health, but again relapsed, and to the close of his life declined more and more, though the notion of his imbecility appears to have been erroneous.

Lord Sunderland, notwithstanding the letter of his wife and all her tender appeals for her children, not only married again, much against the consent of the duke and duchess, but injured his children in their fortunes, and from that time became the enemy of his father and mother-in-law, encouraging reports against them of favour to the Pretender, and disturbing them in every way, regardless of the failing health of his father-in-law.

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* Lord Wharncliffe.

The duchess found it necessary to exculpate herself in an interview with the King, by delivering a letter, for she could not speak any language but English, which George I. did not understand, and his cold reply was far from satisfactory, when he thus wrote:—

"St. James's, Dec. 17, 1720.

"Whatever I may have been told on your account, I think I have shown, on all occasions, the value I have for the services of the duke your husband; and I am always disposed to judge of him and you by the behaviour of each of you in regard to my service. Upon which I pray God, my Lady Marlborough, to preserve you in all happiness,

"GEORGE R."

The death of the Duke of Marlborough occurred in June 1721, and it is evident, by his will, which he signed very shortly before, that his mind was not so enfeebled as has been occasionally represented.

The only failing of the duke was a fondness for money, and a habit of penuriousness, which no doubt has been, after all, much exaggerated. A thousand stories of his avarice have been told, probably merely to afford a jest to those who were not his friends, and are best listened to and answered by Lord Bolingbroke's remark to one who ridiculed him for his meanness,—"He was so very great a man, that I forgot he had that vice."

Whatever mortifications it had been thought fit that the great general should experience during his life, there was nothing of which his friends could complain in the honours paid to him after he had no longer need of them. His body lay in state, according to a usage, then as now, looked upon as dignified, although perhaps one of the most barbarous and revolting customs which we have derived from our ancestors.

> "Dust we are, and unto dust shall we return,"

wherefore, then, delay the moment of humility, and why linger out the vain pomp and circumstance belonging to this world, unless, indeed, such a display of futile grandeur is intended to convey a great lesson of the vanity of human glory?

The funeral was the most splendid that can be imagined; the body was first deposited in Westminster Abbey, and afterwards taken to Blenheim, where it was placed in a mausoleum erected by Rysbach, under the superintendence of the bereaved duchess, who had, in her husband, lost her only friend: one who loved her well enough to be indulgent to her faults, and who supported her in all her sorrows and vexations. She had lost her two favourite daughters, and those remaining were much estranged from her, so that she doubly felt his loss. She had attended him in his last illness with a devotion which redeemed her character from supposed harshness, and she could scarcely ever recur to his memory without shedding tears. His unalterable attachment to her nothing could shake, and the manner in which he disposed of his property, so greatly in her favour, proves how much he valued her: the following is a passage from his last will:—

"And whereas, in and by my said herein-before-cited will, I gave to my said wife, and her assigns, during the term of her natural life, the sum of ten thousand pounds per annum, clear of taxes; and whereas my personal estate is since greatly increased, and my said wife has been very tender and careful of me, and had great trouble with me during my illness; and I intending, for the consideration aforesaid, and out of the tender affection, great respect, and gratitude, which I have and bear to her, and for the better increase of her title and honour, to increase, &c."

Henrietta, Countess of Godolphin, inherited the title and honours of her father, with a reversionary entail upon the male issue of any of her sisters. Her son, Lord Rialton, was to receive a more ample allowance than his cousins, together with various heir-looms of great value—amongst which were, the service of gold plate presented to the duke by the Elector of Hanover, and the diamond-hilted sword given to him by the Emperor Charles.

The Duchess of Marlborough's great wealth rendered her an object, even though no longer young, calculated to attract mercenary suitors, and scarcely had a few months elapsed since her widowhood, when she was assailed by offers of marriage. Her own, and her late husband's friend, Lord Coningsby, now twice a widower, with children, was the first in the list; and he used all his endeavours to excite pity in her mind for his own children, as well as those orphans of her beloved daughter whom she had adopted. Mrs. Thomson, in her life of the duchess, gives several of his letters from Coxe's MSS. which are characteristic and curious, although their eloquence and cunning did not avail to produce the effect intended. He writes thus to his "dearest, dearest Lady Marlborough," as he calls her:—

"When I had the honour to wait on your Grace at Blenheim, it struck me to the heart to find you, the best, the worthiest, and the wisest of women, with regard to your health, and consequently your precious life, in the worst of ways.

"Servants are, at the best, very sorry trustees for anything so valuable; and that which terrified me, and which has ever since lain dreadfully heavy on my thoughts, was the coolness I imagine I observed in yours, when you lay, to my apprehension, in that dangerous condition which it was my unhappiness to see you in.

"Think, madam, what will become of those two dear children which you, with all the reasons in the world, love best, should they be (which God in heaven forbid) so unfortunate as to lose you!

"I can preach most feelingly on the subject, having been taught, from the ingratitude of the world, the want of true friendship in it: and from the most unnatural falsehood of nearest relatives, how uneasy it is upon a bed of sickness, to think of leaving helpless and beloved children to merciless and mercenary (and it is ten million to one but they prove both) trustees and guardians: and had I not trusted in God, in my late dangerous indisposition, that he would not bereave my two dearest innocents of me, their affectionate father, such thoughts had killed me. But God has been merciful to me, and so I, from my soul, pray he may be in preserving you to them."

These expressions of Lord Coningsby are sufficient to prove that the duchess must have been unjustly accused of want of piety, otherwise he, when endeavouring to insinuate himself into her good graces, would scarcely have dwelt so much on the subject of thankfulness to God. He continues, persuading her to come to London:—

"I could give many more reasons for your Grace being in this place at this time, but these will prove sufficient to one of your discerning."

The *love-sick* Lord Coningsby, who, perhaps, was really attached to the still attractive duchess, whom he had long admired, when he had no hope, probably finding his numerous letters not sufficiently understood, at length wrote her the following:—

"Albemarle-st. Nov. 20, 1722.

"* * * And these little innocents" (his children) "have been my only comforters and counsellors, and, under God, my support from the most dismal day when I was so unfortunate to be deprived of the most delightful conversation of my dearest, dearest Lady Marlborough, to whom alone I could open the innermost thoughts of my loaded heart; and by whose exalted wisdom, and by a friendship more sincere than is now to be met in any other breast among all the men and women in the world, I found relief from all my then prevailing apprehensions, and was sometimes put in hope that the great and Almighty Disposer of all things would, out of his infinite goodness to me, at his own time, and in his own way, establish those blessings (which he then showed me but a glimpse of, and suffered me to enjoy but a moment) to me for the term of my happy life.

"How these pleasing expectations were frightfully lessened by the ill state of health I found you in at Blenheim, I need not tell you, because you could not but see the confusion the melancholy sight put me into. And it was no small addition to my concern to see (as I imagined at least) so much indifference in the preservation of a life so precious amongst those entrusted with it; and had I not been deluded to believe that I should soon have the honour to see your Grace here, I had, before I left Woodstock, sent to you to know by what safe method I might communicate to you any matter necessary for you to be informed of relative to my dear country, or your dearer self.

"But I was not only disappointed of these intentions by the long progress you have made, and during which time, by enquiring every day at your door, I learnt from your porter that he knew not how to send a letter to you till you returned to St. Albans, and where, the moment I knew you were arrived, I presumed to send you the letter to which you honoured me with an answer by the post, but * * *

"And now I am altogether at a loss to tell my dear Lady Marlborough whether the pleasure that dear letter brought me, or the terrors it gave me, had the ascendant in me, and of this doubt you, and you alone, must judge."

Polonius himself, if he had written a love-letter, could not have expressed himself more quaintly and more sententiously than Lord Coningsby, the remainder of whose epistle must surely have caused a smile from her to whom such tenderness was addressed:—

"First, then, the pleasure was infinite to hear that your health was restored to you.

"But, then, the terror was unutterable, when you took so much pains to let me know how little you valued a life that I thought inestimable.

"Again, the pleasure was vastly great in reading those delightful words which so fully expressed sincere Lady Marlborough's regard for me, and concern for me and my dearest children.

"But then the terror was insupportable upon me when I found you were unalterably determined not to see this place this winter, but likewise your letter being sent by the post, and which was opened by the miscreants of the office, seemed to be a sort of dreadful indication to me that you designed to put an end to all further correspondence with me.

"And when I had the additional mortification of being assured that you had been in town, and at your own house for a day and a night, and would not allow me or mine the least notice of it, which, with the dismal thoughts that it brought into my head and heart, I will, for my own ease, strive for ever, for ever to forget.

" Your commanding my dearest Peggy to show me the letter your most beloved writ to her will help me to this happiness, and makes me hope I shall receive an assurance, under your dearest hand, that you designed it for that purpose.

" Though I desire above all things in this world to see you for a moment, yet so much do I prize Lady Marlborough's safety above my own satisfaction, that I would not have you in this distracted place, at this dismal juncture, for any consideration under Heaven. I intend, by God's permission, to leave it soon myself: but whither to go, or how to dispose of a life entirely devoted to you, I know not until I receive your orders and commands.

" But I live in hopes that the great and glorious Creator of the world, who does and must direct all things, will direct you to make me the happiest man upon the face of the earth, and enable me to make my dearest, dearest Lady Marlborough, as she is the wisest and best, the happiest of all women.

" I am,—your Grace knows I am,—with the truest, sincerest, the most faithful heart, &c. &c.

" CONINGSBY."

The postscript to this wild epistle, which goes far to prove that love makes all ages equal in folly, is a sad descent from the heroical vein:—

"There is no such cattle or sheep as your Grace desires to be had till July next."

The next suitor of the duchess was no other than the widower of Elizabeth Percy, who had succeeded her with Queen Anne. He, like the rejected Lord Coningsby, pleaded a long-concealed passion; and, in the true style of Orondates, addressed her in the most humble and moving strains. If the duchess possessed the ambition of admiration as well as that of power, she might have been softened by the homage paid to her at the age of sixty-two; but she probably appreciated the motives of this apparent devotion. Her correspondent, Maynwaring, had, besides, too often ridiculed the "proud duke's" pretensions to her Grace, and been encouraged by her to do so, for her to listen to the proposals of one thus characterised:—

"For a man that has no talents to do any one thing in the world, to think that he is to do everything, and to have all preferments pass through his hands, is something so much out of the way, that it is hard to find a name for it."

The pride and absurdity of the Duke of Somerset were almost beyond belief, and become quite farcical in relating. He held his state to be quite regal; intimated his commands to his servants by signs; when he travelled, sent men before to clear the way of all inquisitive persons who might venture to intrude "between the wind and his nobility." His children were obliged to stand in his presence: even when he slept, he expected one of his daughters to watch, standing by his side, like an Eastern slave; and Lady Charlotte Seymour, on one occasion, venturing, from exhaustion, to sit down, he was so much offended, that he left her, in his will, twenty thousand pounds less than her sister. He took precedence of all but the Duke of Norfolk, and entertained as much as annoyed all the court with his ridiculous pretensions.

The answer of the duchess to the proposal of this gorgeous simpleton was magniloquent as his own sentiments, and quite in accord with the pompous manners of the day. She professed a great sense of the honour he intended her; but added, that were she to receive an offer to become Cæsar's empress, "she would not permit him to succeed in that heart which had been devoted to the Duke of Marlborough."

The duchess must have found it difficult to frame her answers so as to suit the different tempers of her lovers; now sentimental, now magnificent, like the suitors of the fair Lady of Belmont. Although she would not marry this haughty nobleman, the duchess preserved a friendship for him to the end of her life, for she was able, in the midst of his follies, to discern and appreciate the merits which he really possessed.

Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, in spite of frequent solicitations, remained a widow to the last, surviving her beloved and heroic husband twenty-two years. This period was not passed without many disputes with persons in power, the chief of whom was Sir Robert Walpole, who seemed to take the place of Lord Oxford in her dislike. The differences between them having risen to a great height, the duchess's judicious friend and correspondent, the excellent Dr. Hare, afterwards Bishop of Chichester, addressed to her some admonitions on the subject, which she received with that moderation in which, evidently, in spite of the violence of her temper, she was not wanting when she thoroughly respected the motives of those who ventured to offer her advice or reproof. What he says does as much credit to his honesty and candour as her reply does to her judgment and feeling:—

"I hope and believe, madam," he writes, "that I need not tell your Grace that I have the most affectionate esteem for you, and not only esteem, but really admire you for your fine understanding and good sense, and for the just and noble sentiments which you express on all occasions in the best language, and in the most agreeable manner, so that one cannot hear you without the greatest pleasure; but the more I esteem and admire what is excellent in your Grace, the more concerned am I to see any blemishes in so great a character. * * * Ill-grounded suspicions, violent passions, and a boundless liberty of expressing resentments, without distinction, from the prince downwards, and that in the most public manner, and before servants, are certainly blemishes, and not only so, but attended with great inconveniences; they lessen exceedingly the influence and interest persons of your Grace's fortune and endowments would otherwise have, and unavoidably create enemies."

No man of judgment would have thought it worth while to address a remonstrance of such a kind to one for whom he did not really entertain as high an opinion as that which the bishop expressed, and this, amongst many other proofs, clearly demonstrates that the only fault of the Duchess of Marlborough was a temper, whose infirmities she did not, in general, take sufficient pains to subdue. She was herself all truth, and honesty, and openness, and when she saw that those with whom she had concerns were endeavouring to overreach her, or when she discovered in them the absence of qualities for which she was herself distinguished, her indignation broke forth, imprudently and violently, and she was sometimes so carried away by passion that she deprived herself of the advantages her powerful sense would otherwise have given. In this she resembled all persons of infirm temper, who never reason with themselves in time, and after the mischief is done are often too proud to repair, as much as they ought to do, the consequences of their weakness. Like her husband's vice of parsimony, opposed to his shining virtues, her bad temper was her only crime, and certainly ought not to be dwelt upon so much as it generally is, in consideration of her great character in other respects.

The following is her answer to Dr. Hare's letter ·—

"Even when I am not convinced that I have done wrong, I always take it (advice) kindly, and therefore I am confident I shall never forget it, though you desire me, and in this I imitate your humble servant Dy, for when I make a sort of apology for telling her anything that may prevent any mischief to her, she always says, she loves me better for telling her of any fault; and I desire you will believe that my nature is the same; and I beg of you never to have the least scruple in telling me anything you think, for I am not so partial to myself as not to know that I have many imperfections, but a great fault I will never have that I know to be one. * * *

"I am sorry to find you think my resentments are so strong, that I must be more calm before I can make right reflections. I think I can be easily convinced by reason, and I am sure I never was in a passion about these things, nor I believe never shall be about anything that any court or ministers can do to me. I know the world too well to let anything of that sort strike very deep, and I hope I shall always take care (as I have hitherto done) not to be the aggressor. * * *

"I must own that I cannot come up to your discretion as to keeping my thoughts to myself when I know I am in the right, and when I never had any obligation, which is my case, *from the highest downwards*, as you express it. I can't see that I am obliged upon any account not to say the truth, let it fall upon whom it will; and if I could have so sweet a temper as you wish me, I can't see that it would be any use to me; for if all the good wishes that I have made for this government (not to mention some services) can't make the ministers treat me with common decency, I don't see why I should deny myself the pleasure of speaking my mind upon any occasion. I never yet saw any creature that was so tame, unless it were somebody that could not be contented to live upon what they had; and though I have as much pleasure in serving friends as anybody ever felt, yet upon that account I would not do what I would never do for myself though I were ever so much reduced in my fortune, that is, make a mean court to those that have used me ill, before I ever had a thought of saying one wry word of them; and as for what you say of the boundless liberty which I take without distinction, the person that you now would defend has taken much greater, though he had obligations to him, and you see, as to interest, that has done him no hurt, since he can make that person do whatever he pleases: but I don't design to take him for my pattern.

"I have been misrepresented by a great many vile persons, and so must any one that would cross a worthless man or woman's passions, though it be ever so right to do it; and I am very little concerned for what you seem to think is the sense of many concerning my behaviour, because I am sure they don't know me; and by what I have seen in most in my acquaintance I have hardly ever found that they could take the advice in their own case that some will give. For my own part, I own to you freely, that I should be sorry to have less resentment than I have, since it does not make me uneasy; for I never yet saw anybody that would submit to ill-usage that was capable of friendship or of anything that is good.

"I never was false, or did an ill thing to anybody; and if those that do both hurt one when they have no provocation from me to do it, I think I am at liberty to say whatever is true of them, and I wish nobody went further. I am sure I never will, whatever injury may be done me, which I have found generally fell upon me from those that wanted to defend their own wrong actions.

"I think it is now high time to have done, since I dare say I have tired you, but not altered your opinion of me; but, however that may happen, I am sure that I shall always be your most humble and thankful humble servant, unless I should find you otherwise than you have ever been to me, which I think is not possible after the long experience that I have had of you, and of so many friendships shown to me upon several occasions. By what you have written 'tis possible that you will call this letter the effect of passion; but I assure you that I am in none; and if you think this passion, you must think so of me as long as I live, for I have not the least anger against those you mention: one is imposed upon, and must be so, and the others can't help their nature, nor I can't help thinking of them as I do, nor can anybody expect that one can either love or value those that have few or no good qualities so much as one does those that have.

"Tell me that you have forgiven this very long letter, for I could not make it shorter without studying a long time, and you know my way is to tumble out the truth just as it comes in my head."

The duchess, it must be confessed, was singularly unfortunate in being almost solitary in her honesty and noble-mindedness; for neither sovereigns, nor, in general, ministers, with whom she was thrown in contact, possessed characters which the world has any reason to admire. Neither Anne, George I., nor Queen Caroline, deserve much from posterity; and it is by no means to the discredit of the duchess, or a proof of her bad disposition, that she was at variance with each. Queen Caroline, although admired as Princess of Wales, and the duchess was inclined to think well of her, behaved in a mean and unworthy manner towards the widow of Marlborough, denying her certain petty privileges, which the duchess did not patiently forego, such as a right of entrance into St. James's Park, and exemption from taxes on her house in Windsor Park, of which she was ranger. Those amongst her children and grandchildren with whom she is accused of not living well, were not amiable, and seem to have been actuated by mercenary and mean motives in their conduct towards her.

Of the four sons and one daughter left her as a legacy by her favourite, Lady Sunderland, the eldest, a fine youth, was early snatched away from her, to the renewal of her sorrow for his mother's death. It is of him she writes, in answer to a letter from Lady Hary Wortley Montagu, with whom she was on terms of affectionate regard:—

SARAH, DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH, TO LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU.

"Windsor Lodge, Sep. 25, 1722.

"Your letter, dear Lady Mary, is so extremely kind, upon the subject of poor dear Lord Sunderland, that I cannot help thanking you, and assuring you that I shall always remember your goodness to me in the best manner I can. It is a cruel misfortune to lose so valuable a young man in all respects, though his successor has all the virtues that I could wish: but still it is a heavy affliction to me to have one droop so untimely from the only branch that I can ever hope to receive any comfort from in my own family.

"Your concern for my health is very obliging; but, as I have gone through so many misfortunes, some of which were very uncommon, it is plain that nothing will kill me but distempers and physicians.

"Pray do me the favour to present my humble service to Mr. Wortley, and to your agreeable daughter, and believe me,

"Very sincerely, dear madam,
"Your most faithful and most humble servant,
"S. Marlborough."

"*To the Right Hon. the Lady Mary*
Wortley Montagu, at Twickenkam."

Charles, the next brother, who succeeded eventually as Duke of Marlborough, is said never to have been a favourite with his grandmother. He was extravagant and thoughtless, though he possessed some good qualities, and he could not bend his spirit to sufficient submission to satisfy the duchess. Lady Anne Bateman, his sister, who was far from amiable, introduced him to Henry Fox, Lord Holland, a man of taste, wit, dangerous talent, and libertine principles, a partisan of Sir Robert Walpole, and consequently distasteful to her Grace. Her grandson became his friend, and lost her esteem, while he gained the hollow friendship of the ministers in power. The duchess was accustomed, on this occasion, to say of Lord Holland, "That is the Fox that has won over my goose."

Lady Anne Bateman seems to have repaid the duchess's care of her youth by turbulence and opposition to her wishes, and to have done all in her power to thwart her intentions. She was the means of bringing about a marriage between her brother, the duke, over whom she had extraordinary influence, and one of the daughters of Lord Trevor, a man the duchess particularly disliked. A laughable anecdote is related by Horace Walpole, whose wit must generally be considered, rather than his truth, on the occasion of his good stories :—

"On the marriage of the young Duke of Marlborough, his grandmother banished him and his wife from Windsor Lodge. She asserted that the young duchess, before she retired, had stripped the house and gardens; and, in derision, she set up, in a puppet-show, eight figures to represent the eight Miss Trevors, cousins of the young duchess, tearing up the shrubs, while their relative was carrying away a hencoop under her arm."

The extravagance of the two brothers rose at last to such a height, that a law-suit was the consequence between them and their grandmother, which for some time gratified the enemies of the duchess, for during the course of its proceeding she exhibited but little patience under the infliction of their ill conduct. Lord Sunderland having claimed the famous diamond-hilted sword left by the great duke, his demand was indignantly disputed by the duchess:—

"What!" she exclaimed, "shall I suffer that sword, which *my* lord would have carried to the gates of Paris, to be sent to a pawnbroker's, to have the diamonds picked out one by one!"

She has been accused of harshness towards her grandson; but his deceptions, promises of amendment, his unbounded profusion, his carelessness of his family's interests, and the whole tenor of his conduct, amply exonerate her from the charge. She says of him—

"He has a great deal in him like his father, but I cannot say he has any guilt, because he really does not know what is right and what is wrong, and will always change every three days what he designed, from the influence and flattery of wretches who think of nothing but of getting for themselves; and if I should give him my whole estate, he would throw it away, as he has done his grandfather's, and he would come at last to the Treasury for a pension for his vote."

Her heir, the Honourable John Spencer, generally called *Jack*, possessed no better qualities than the duke; but, perhaps, he had a more endearing manner, and an affection for his grandmother, which might have, in her eyes, covered a multitude of sins: for for him her partiality was extreme and her provision magnificent, though no better deserved.

"Lady Dy," of whom she always speaks in terms of great affection, appears to have been interesting and amiable; but she died early, like all the most worthy of her family, after being the wife of Lord John Russell only four years. The duchess had fondly looked forward to much happiness in this union, as her letter to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu testifies:—

"Blenheim, Sep. 28, 1731.

"You are always very good to me, dear Lady Mary, and I am sensible of it, as I ought to be. All things are agreed upon, and the writings, drawing, for Dy's marriage with my Lord John Russel, which is in every particular to my satisfaction: but they cannot be married till we come to London. I propose to myself more satisfaction than I thought there had been in store for me. I believe you have heard me say that I desired to die when I had disposed well of her; but I desire that you would not put me in mind of it, for I now have a mind to live till I have married my Torismond, which name I have given long to John Spencer. I am in such hurries of business that I must end.

&c.

"My hand is lame, and I cannot write myself, which is the better for you."

Lady Anne Egerton, the daughter of Lady Bridgewater, had no virtues to replace her cousin, the charming "Lady Dy;" she was headstrong, turbulent, and inherited her grandmother's faults without her strength of mind and talent. Their quarrels were continual and ludicrous; the duchess exposing herself and the object of her anger to all her acquaintances whenever an opportunity occurred. One instance is told by Horace Walpole, of her having her grand-daughter's picture blackened, and an inscription to be placed on the frame setting forth that Lady Anne was "much blacker within." This flattering intimation was hung up for the benefit of all visitors: as this story is, however, told as happening to another grand-daughter, it must be received with caution.*

The Duchess of Montague was the only one of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough's, daughters, whom she did not survive, and she was no friend to her mother: all the affection that should have existed between them was transferred to her charming daughter Isabella, afterwards Duchess of Manchester.

One of her favourite correspondents, in her latter years, was Mr. Scrope, who appears to have humoured her caprices and enjoyed her wit: in answer to her having complained of being now, after all her power, insignificant, he replies:—

"I hope your Grace will excuse the freedom with which I write, and that you will pardon my observing, by the latter part of your letter, that the great Duchess of Marlborough is not always exempted from the vapours. How your Grace can think yourself 'insignificant,' I can't imagine. You can despise your enemies (if any such you have); you can laugh at fools who have authority only in their own imaginations; and your Grace hath not only the power, but a pleasure in doing good to every one who is honoured with your friendship or compassion. Who can be more (q. less?) insignificant?"

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* Walpole, who delighted to vilify her, remarks, with his usual sarcasm, "it was said of old Sarah, Duchess of Marlbro', that she never put dots over her *i*'s, to save ink: how she would have enjoyed modern economy in that article! she would have died worth a thousand farthings more than she did!—nay, she would have known exactly how many, as Sir Robert Brown did, who calculated what he had saved by never having an orange or lemon on his sideboard."

There are so many instances on record of the Duchess of Marlborough's tenderness of heart, that it is more natural to suppose that many with whom she was offended were the parties to blame in her quarrels, than that all the fault rested with her. She was fond of talent and simplicity of heart, appreciated goodness, and delighted in natural characters. Amongst her later favourites the accomplished Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and her daughter, Lady Bute, were distinguished; and to them she used to relate the celebrated story of her having, in a fit of anger, cut off the luxuriant tresses for which she was admired, and which the duke, her husband, delighted in, in the hope of vexing him who was the cause of her ill-humour. She related how she took the despoiled locks and placed them conspicuously in an antechamber, where they could not fail to be seen by the duke. But shortly afterwards, meeting him, and observing in his manner no appearance of vexation or perturbation, she imagined that her scheme had failed, and seeking for the ringlets without effect, she was ashamed to say anything on the subject, surprised though she was, to find they had disappeared.

With tears of grateful tenderness she concluded her story by recounting that, after Marlborough's death, the missing treasure was found by her in a secret cabinet belonging to him, where all that he most prized was secured.

Some of her own reflections and observations may, perhaps, as much as any comment, show the general bent of her mind, and the spirit and shrewdness with which she remarked circumstances and judged of persons :—

FROM THE DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH'S MSS.

" 1736.—One of my chief pleasures is, that after such an hour, in this place, (Windsor Lodge,) I am sure I can see nobody. At Marlborough House it is very different; for there are many visitors, though few that have any sense, or that are capable of any friendship or truth. I would desire no more pleasure than to walk about my gardens and parks; but, alas! that is not permitted; for I am generally wrapped up in flannel and wheeled up and down my rooms in a chair. I cannot be very solicitous for life upon such terms, when I can only live to have more fits of the gout."

"I never design to see Blenheim again: in a lodge I have everything convenient and without trouble."

"1737.—Came yesterday from Wimbleton. Though it stands high, it is upon clay, an ill-sod, very damp, and, I believe, an unhealthy place, which I shall very seldom live in, and consequently I have thrown away a vast sum of money upon it to little purpose."

OPINIONS OF SARAH, DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH.

1788. ORIGINAL MSS.

"1737. *Dogs.* I am very fond of my three dogs,* they have all of them gratitude, wit, and good sense; things very rare to be found in this country. They are fond of going out with me; but when I reason with them, and tell them it is not proper, they submit, and watch for my coming home, and meet me with as much joy as if I had never given them good advice."

"Were I a man, I freely own that I would not venture anything that I could avoid for any

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* This is supposed to allude to her three grand-daughters.

King that I know, or that I ever heard of. As princes are not the best judges of right and wrong, from the flattery they are used to, not to say worse of them, I think the best thing for them, and the whole nation, is, not to let them have power to hurt themselves or anybody else.

"I am of opinion, from woful experience, that from flattery, or want of understanding, most princes are alike, and therefore it is to no purpose to argue against their passions, but to defend ourselves at all events against them. This makes me think of the Castile oath. 'We that are as good as yourself, and more powerful, chose you to be our King upon such conditions.'

"I am, and ever shall be, of the opinion, that nothing is so much worth struggling for as liberty, and I have given demonstration that in all times I have done every thing in my poor power that could contribute toward that happy condition, and I will continue to do it as long as I live. But alas, what can it signify the endeavours of an old woman?"

"I am a perfect cripple, and cannot possibly hold out long; and as I have little enjoyment of my life, I am very indifferent about it. It is impossible that one of my age and infirmities can live long, and one great happiness there is in death, that one shall never hear any more of anything they do in this world." She quotes the celebrated lines of Dryden, "When I consider life," &c. and says most people have felt the truth of them.

"*Chamber Organ.* I am now in pursuit of getting the finest piece of music that ever was heard: it is a thing that will play eight tunes. Handel, and all the great musicians, say that it is beyond any thing they can do, and this may be performed by the most ignorant person, and when you are weary of these eight tunes, you may have them changed for any others you like. This I think much better than going to the Italian Opera, or an assembly. This performance has been lately put into a lottery, and all the royal family chose to have a great many tickets, rather than buy it, the price being, I think, 1000*l.* infinitely a less sum than some bishoprics have been sold for; and a gent. won it, who I am in hopes will sell it, and if he will, I will buy it, for I cannot live to have another made, and I will carry it into the country with me."

"I think one can't leave the world in a better time than now, when there is no such thing as real friendship, truth, justice, and honour, or indeed anything that is agreeable in life. I am so weary of life, that I don't care how soon the stroke is given to me, which I only wish may be with as little pain as possible.

"As to my own particular, I have nothing to reproach myself with, and I think it very improbable that I should live to suffer what others will do who have contributed to the ruin of their country, and when I am dead I shall hear nothing of it, nor have the uneasiness, when I die, of parting with anything that gives me much pleasure. I have always thought that the greatest happiness of life was to love and value somebody extremely that returned it, and to see them often, and if one has an easy fortune, that is what makes one's life pass away agreeably. But, alas! there is such a change in the world since I knew it first, that though one's natural pleasure is to love people, the generality of the world are in something or other so disagreeable, that it's impossible to do it, and added to this I am a cripple, lifted about like a child, and very seldom free from pain."

"*March* 19, 1737. *Windsor Election.* The opposer of the Duke of Marlborough is my Lord Vere, Nell Gwyn's grandson, and of the family of the idiots, who I dare say will carry it, because they will always vote as they are ordered by the minister, let him be ever so bad. Nothing illegal or wrong has been done on the duke's side, for people out of power can neither turn any one in or out; but on t'other side, all manner of infamous practices were used. * * * A poor soldier, whose arm was shot off under the Duke of Marlborough, and who had a pension from Chelsea College, was ordered to give his vote for Lord Vere, having a house at Windsor and a right to do it, and told if he did not his pension should be taken away, to which he answered 'I will venture starving rather than it shall be said that I voted against the Duke of Marlborough's grandson, after having followed his grandfather so many hundred leagues;' and accordingly he voted against Lord Vere. I don't know whether they have taken away his pension, but I hope they will, for I have sent him word, if they do take it away, I will settle the same upon him for life."

Lord Vere, as may be supposed from his interest, gained the election.

"1737-8. Women signify nothing, unless they are the mistresses of a prince or a first minister, which I would not be if I were young; and I think there are very few, if any, women, that have understanding or impartiality enough to serve well those they really wish to serve."

"1738. I think that all the people in places, and those of the *patriots* that have a mind to have them, will keep and get all the employments they can to the last moment, without any regard to what may happen to England."

"1738. *My Entail.* I have made a settlement of a very great estate, that is in my own power, upon my grandson, John Spencer, and his sons: but they are all to forfeit it, if any of them shall ever accept any employment, military or civil, or any pension from any King or Queen of this realm, and the estate is to go to others in the entail. This, I think, ought to please every body; for it will secure my heirs in being very considerable men. None 'of them can put on a fool's coat, and take posts from soldiers of experience and service,' who never did anything but kill pheasants and partridges.

"Their heirs may do great service to their country, and ought to be well received when they go to court, since they will have nothing to ask; for I would have them join with any King or minister when they desire nothing but what is for the good of the nation and the King, who, in truth, must always have the same interest. But if we should ever happen to have a prince that would rump members for giving their vote for the true interest of their country, in that case a man with a great fortune may be very well content to live at home, and keep much better company than I have known for many years at court."

"1738-9. *Gustavus Vasa, a tragedy (by Brooke).* Prologue has, I think, some good lines in it. The Duke of Grafton did not see the prologue, but refused to licence the play, and said they must write plays on such subjects as the Orphan. I have read the play in MS. which is thought by judges to be a very good one. The story is not at all applicable to the present time, but of a King of Sweden, and has nothing in it but characters of virtuous people, and speaking on the side of liberty, which is now a great offence."

"1738-9. I compare our situation to a ship near sinking, which can't be saved but by some extraordinary accident which may possibly happen, but much more likely not to happen: and the generality of the world are so worthless, that I am pretty indifferent when the total ruin comes. As far as anything depends upon me, I am sure nothing can hinder me from acting as I have done; and as I can't live long, I am sure they can't do anything that will quite starve me, who never had one grain of vanity in my inclination. I think in all ages there have been as bad men, and some worse, than Sir Robert. 'Tis true he has impoverished and ruined his country for power and gain: but he could have done no mischief if men of great fortunes had not assisted him, which will certainly end in the ruin of themselves and their posterity; and I am sure I have not the honour to be acquainted, or to have the least intimacy with many that are not fools; and I know of no remedy against that * * * Others may hope, if they can, in what is to come, but I have none."

"1740. As I have seen so much of a very bad world, I must own I have no taste left but to have what is just necessary to support myself and those that I am obliged to take care of, which are a great many."

"*Duke of Montague.* 1740. All his talents lie in things natural only to boys of fifteen, and he is about fifty-two : to get people into his garden and wet them with squirts, and to invite people to his country houses, and put things into the beds to make them itch, and twenty such pretty fancies as these."*

When the duchess was eighty-two years of age she published the vindication of her conduct against all the attacks that in the course of her long life had been made upon it. The work was entitled, "An Account of the Dowager Duchess of Marlborough, from her first coming to Court in the year 1710." She gave to Nathaniel Hooke, an author of little celebrity, the large sum of five thousand pounds to aid her in the work, although, except in some trifling particulars, she must have been quite equal to being her own editor. Her "Vindication" was attacked and defended. Henry Fielding, who then conducted "The Champion," most successfully fought on her side; but Horace Walpole, with his dangerous and unscrupulous wit, has, perhaps, been more readily believed when he loses no opportunity to ridicule and abuse her: his epigrammatic vituperation was formed to impose on and please the idle public, and he laughed away the character of a great woman without remorse, while all his readers were afraid to differ with so irresistible a mocker, who so agreeably pandered to the common taste.

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* His mother-in-law does not name that he was good without ostentation—his vast benevolence of soul is not recorded by Pope, but it will be remembered while there is any tradition of kindness or charity in England.—*Lord Hailes.*

Walpole thus unfeelingly writes to his friend, Sir Horace Mann:—

> "Old Marlborough is dying—but who can tell? Last year she had lain a great while ill, without speaking: her physicians said she must be blistered, or she would die: she called out, 'I won't be blistered, and I won't die.' If she takes the same resolution now, I don't believe she will."

Her latest occupation, besides her own "Vindication," was arranging papers to form a life of the Duke of Marlborough, which she wished some able historians to write, and which she calculated would occupy two folios, with the Appendix. Of this "labour of love" she remarks, that she felt assured it would form—

> "The most charming history that had ever been writ in any country; and I would rather," she adds, "if I were a man, have deserved to have such an account certified of me, as will be of the two lords that are mentioned, (Marlborough and Godolphin,) than have the greatest pension or estate settled upon me that our own King, so full of justice and generosity, will give to reward the quick and great performances brought about by my Lord Carteret and his partner, the Earl of Bath."

The duchess could never, even on the most serious occasions, repress her sarcasm and contempt for those she despised.

She mentions that "in all her houses she has *loads of papers*," which she intends to get together to assist this precious history, and writes to Mr. Scrope with great animation on the subject of her labours.

That the duchess was generous and liberal her acts prove, in spite of the assertions to the contrary of her enemies. An instance is recorded by the newspapers of the day, which is too remarkable to be passed over.

* One of the firm of the Childs was oppressed nearly to his ruin by an opposition from the Bank. Upon this occasion a member of the family stated his case to the Duchess of Marlborough, who placed the following order in his hands :—

"Pay the bearer the sum of one hundred thousand pounds.

"SARAH MARLBOROUGH."

"*To the Governor and Company*
of the Bank of England."

The Bank, of course, dropped the quarrel; but their persecution made the fortune of the banker.

Amongst other charities, she founded at St. Albans alms-houses for decayed gentlewomen on a most benevolent and judicious plan.

This remarkable woman, who for so many years occupied the attention of Europe no less than her heroic husband, died at Marlborough House, on the 18th of October, 1744.

She left enormous wealth : thirty thousand a-year to Charles, Duke of Marlborough, and the same to his brother, John Spencer, with numerous other bequests named in her most singular will, dated 11th of August, 1744, in which she desires to be buried at Blenheim, near the body of her dear husband, the Duke of Marlborough, adding,—

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* Mrs. Thomson's Life.

> "If I die before his body is removed thither, I desire Francis, Earl of Godolphin, to direct the same to be removed to Blenheim aforesaid, as was always intended; and I direct that my funeral may be private, with no more expense than decency requires, and no mourning to be given to any other persons except to such of my servants who shall attend at my funeral."

She leaves manors in Leicestershire, which were late the estate of Sir Thomas Cave, Bart., and Elizabeth his wife; and in a codicil, adds:—

> "I give to Duchess of Devonshire, my box of *travelling plate.*
>
> "To Juliana, Countess of Burlington, my bag of gold medals, and the sum of 1000*l.* to buy a ring in remembrance of me, or whatever other thing she pleases.
>
> "To Grace Ridley, (besides much more,) the enamelled pocket picture of the late duke, made up in a locket, and my own picture, drawn by Sir

Godfrey Kneller, which is only a head, (and which is now at Marlborough House,) and my striking watch, which was formerly the late Duke of Marlborough's.

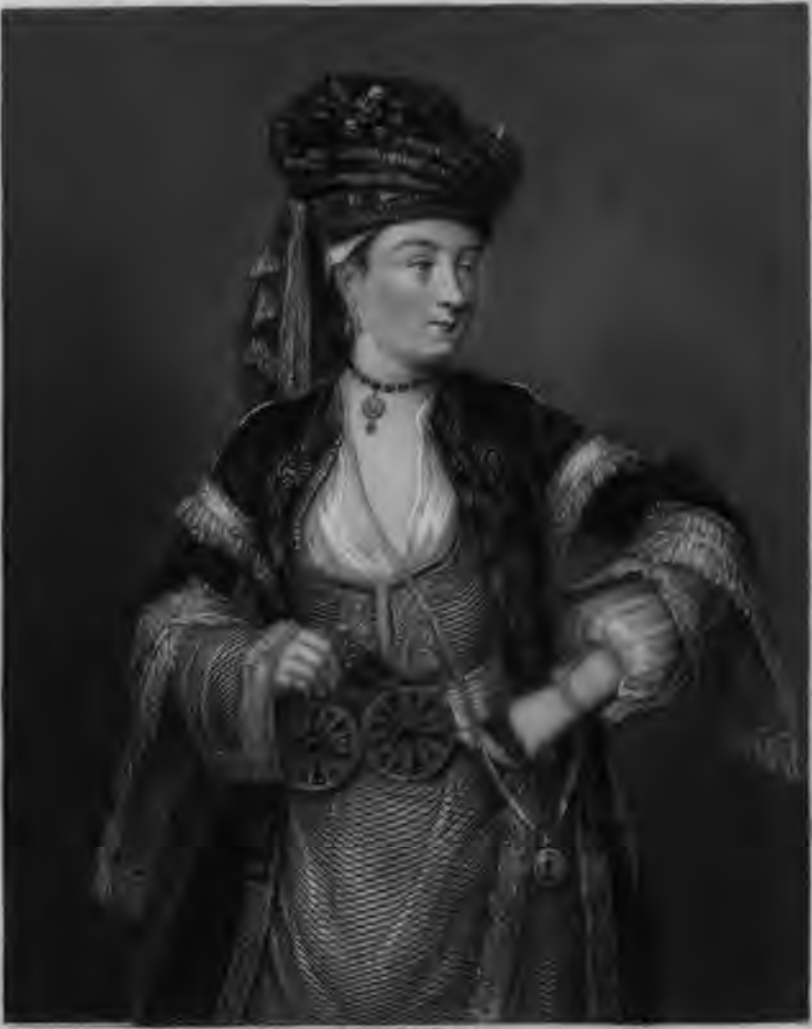
"To Mrs. Jane Patteson 'my striking watch, which formerly belonged to her mistress, my Lady Sunderland.'"

She desires that no part of the duke's life may be *writ in verse,* as it is to be written by Mallet and Glover.

This will occupied eight skins of parchment.

She was, according to her commands, interred in the magnificent monument at Blenheim, in the Chapel, in the same vault with her husband, and the funeral was, as she requested, conducted privately. She forgot none of her servants, even her chairmen had a legacy of twenty pounds a-year. To William Pitt, afterwards Lord Chatham, for the noble defence he made in support of the laws of England, ten thousand pounds: and to Philip, Earl of Chesterfield, twenty thousand pounds, together with her best and largest diamond ring: and, amongst other remarkable clauses, she prohibits the marriage of any one of her grandsons under the age of twenty-one, on penalty of losing the annuity bequeathed to them, and of having half of the proposed sum transferred to their wives.

Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, was original and singular in all her acts, even to the last, and has left a name behind her, rather, perhaps, known from that singularity, than from those parts of her character which best deserve popularity—her love of truth and honesty of principle.



LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU.

ENGRAVED BY PERMISSION FROM AN ORIGINAL MINIATURE
IN THE POSSESSION OF THE EARL OF HARRINGTON.

London. Published by Richard Bentley 1844.

LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU.

The most entertaining, fascinating, witty and brilliant of her sex; learned, accomplished, graceful and beautiful, the irresistible Lady Mary Pierrepont gave from her earliest years promise of what she afterwards became. At eight years old she was a toast, and the fame of her beauty and talents spread from that time, every fresh year adding to her attractions, and luring new admirers, until the crowd of those who followed in her train filled every country through which she passed. She was the very impersonation of all the beauties and enslavers which poets and romancers feign: she might have sat for the portrait of the most finished fine lady, the most enchanting coquette; and she probably, in effect, supplied many a writer with such a heroine as was the fashion of her day.

Yet, with admirers innumerable, and all appliances and means to boot that should have enabled her to make a happy marriage, the charming Lady Mary was unhappy in the choice she made. She possessed so many useful virtues, had so much philanthropy and feeling, that it is impossible but that she would have made a good wife, even in spite of the danger she had run of being spoilt by indulgence and adulation, if she had met with a man of suitable mind, who could have appreciated her good qualities; but Mr. Wortley was a cold, severe, unimaginative person, who, marrying her, a youthful beauty and coquette, should have known how, judiciously, to correct her errors, and brought forth the excellences which existed in her mind; instead of treating her with the sullen neglect to which, from an early period of her marriage, he condemned her.

She was the eldest of the three daughters of Evelyn, Duke of Kingston, and Lady Mary Fielding, daughter of William, Earl of Denbigh; and was born at Thoresby, in Nottinghamshire, about 1690: her first misfortune was the loss of her mother, when she was only four years old, an event which doubtless greatly influenced her future life.

Her father, proud of the talents which even in infancy were conspicuous, is said to have resolved to give her the same advantages as her brother, the Viscount Newark; and with him she is reported to have studied the classics, and become a proficient in all the lore of Greece and Rome, at a period when women, her contemporaries, could scarcely write or spell their own language with common accuracy. This has, however, been doubted; nevertheless, that Bishop Burnet was her preceptor cannot be discredited; and that he delighted in the superior abilities which so readily imbibed instruction, and rewarded with so much honour all those who afforded her the means of improvement; for she gratefully acknowledges her obligations to him, for "condescending to direct the studies of a girl."

The Duke of Kingston (then Earl of Dorchester) was a careless man of fashion, fond of his children, because they were part of his establishment, were beautiful and clever; but beyond his vanity in them, caring little besides about their well-being. Lady Mary was fond of telling an anecdote of herself, which sufficiently shows her father's character.

Lord Kingston was a member of the Kit-cat Club, amongst whom it was customary to name ladies as toasts for the year; and on one occasion, the whim seized him to nominate his little daughter Mary, then under eight years of age, as a candidate for the honours, declaring that her beauty excelled that of any lady of the day. As the young candidate had never been seen by the gentlemen present, they demurred about electing her; but this objection the father laughingly met, by exclaiming that she should immediately be introduced to them all;

and despatched orders home to have her splendidly dressed, and sent to him at the tavern.

The little beauty, delighted at her distinction, arrived full of smiles and gaiety, beaming with infantine graces, and ready to sustain her character for talent: she was, of course, received with acclamation, no hesitation ensued as to her claims, her health was drunk by each admiring member, her name inscribed upon a drinking glass, and the triumph of her father complete. From poet to poet, from wit to wit, the radiant little queen of the night was passed, receiving from each due homage to her charms; statesmen and politicians all joined in the sprightly welcome, overwhelming their laughing guest with compliments and sweetmeats. Lady Mary says herself that—

> "Pleasure was too poor a word to express her sensations: they amounted to extacy: never again, throughout her whole future life, did she pass so happy a day."

Her picture was painted, by her father's order, and presented to the club; it was hung up in their room, and Lady Mary Pierrepont became henceforth an acknowledged toast.

Volatile and sprightly as this lovely child must have been, it is not to be expected that she was, after this scene, very much disposed to pass her life in study and retirement; and yet she contrived, in the midst of the gaiety she loved, to acquire knowledge of all kinds, such as is seldom attained by her sex: she says herself, that her education was "one of the worst in the world;" in spite of which, she became a proficient in all branches of polite literature, besides her classical knowledge; which, though it did not perhaps satisfy herself, was the admiration and wonder of others, as the following letter to the celebrated Bishop Burnet will show:—

TO THE LORD BISHOP OF SALISBURY.

[*With her Translation of Epictetus.*]

"July 20, 1710.

"My Lord,

"Your hours are so well employed, I hardly dare offer you this trifle to look over; but then, so well am I acquainted with the sweetness of temper which accompanies your learning, I dare ever assure myself of a pardon. You have already forgiven me greater impertinencies, and condescended yet farther in giving me instructions, and bestowing some of your minutes in teaching me. This surprising humility has all the effect it ought to have on my heart; I am sensible of the gratitude I owe to so much goodness, and how much I am ever bound to be your servant. Here is the work of one week of my solitude: by the many faults in it, your Lordship will easily believe I spent no more time upon it: it was hardly finished when I was obliged to begin my journey, and I had not leisure to write it over again. You have it here without any corrections, with all its blots and errors: I endeavoured at no beauty of style, but to keep as literally as I could to the sense of the author. My only intention in presenting it, is to ask your Lordship whether I have understood Epictetus? The fourth chapter particularly I am afraid I have mistaken. Piety and greatness of soul set you above all misfortunes that can happen to yourself, except the calumnies of false tongues; but that same piety which renders what happens to yourself indifferent to you, yet softens the natural compassion in your temper to the greatest degree of tenderness for the interests of the Church, and the liberty and welfare of your country: the steps that are now made towards the destruction of both, the apparent danger we are in, the manifest growth of injustice, oppression, and hypocrisy, cannot do otherwise than give your Lordship those hours of sorrow, which, did not your fortitude of soul, and reflections from religion and philosophy, shorten, would add to the national misfortunes, by injuring the health of so great a supporter of our sinking liberties. I ought to ask pardon for this digression: it is more proper for me in this place to say something to excuse an address that looks so very presuming. My sex is usually forbid studies of this nature, and folly reckoned so much our proper sphere, that we are sooner pardoned any excesses of that, than the least pretensions to reading or good sense. We are permitted no books but such as tend to the weakening and effeminating of the mind. Our natural defects are every way indulged, and it is looked upon as in a degree criminal to improve our reason, or fancy we have any. We are taught to place all our art in adorning our outward forms, and permitted, without reproach, to carry that custom even to extravagancy, while our minds are entirely neglected, and, by disuse of reflections, filled with nothing but the trifling objects our eyes are daily entertained with. This custom, so long established and industriously upheld, makes it even ridiculous to go out of the common road, and forces one to find as many excuses, as if it were a thing altogether criminal not to play the fool in concert with other women of quality, whose birth and leisure only serve to render them the most useless and most worthless part of the creation. There is hardly a character in the world more despicable, or more liable to universal ridicule, than that of a learned woman: those words imply, according to the received sense, a talking, impertinent, vain, and conceited creature. I believe nobody will deny that learning may have this effect, but it must be a very superficial degree of it. Erasmus was certainly a man of great learning, and good sense, and he seems to have my opinion of it, when he says, *Fœmina quæ vere sapit, non videtur sibi sapere; contra, quæ cum nihil sapiat sibi videtur sapere, ea demum bis stulta est.* The Abbé Bellegarde gives a right reason for women's talking over-much, that they know nothing, and every outward object strikes their imagination, and produces a multitude of thoughts, which, if they knew more, they would know not worth their thinking of. I am not now arguing for an equality of the two sexes. I do not doubt but that God and nature have thrown us into an inferior rank; we are a lower part of the creation, we owe obedience and submission to the superior sex, and any woman who suffers her vanity and folly to deny this, rebells against the law of the Creator, and indisputable order of nature: but there is a worse effect than this, which follows the careless education given to women of quality, its being so easy for any man of sense, that finds it either his interest or his pleasure, to corrupt them. The common method is, to begin by attacking their religion: they bring them a thousand fallacious arguments, which their excessive ignorance hinders them from refuting: and I speak now from my own knowledge and conversation among them, there are more atheists among the fine ladies than the loosest sort of rakes; and the same ignorance that generally works out into excess of superstition, exposes them to the snares of any who have a fancy to carry them to t'other extream. I have made my excuses already too long, and will conclude in the words of Erasmus: *Vulgus sentit quod lingua Latina non convenit fœminis, quia parum facit ad tuendam illarum pudicitiam, quoniam rarum et insolitum est, fœminam scire Latinam; attamen consuetudo omnium malarum rerum magistra. Decorum est fœminam in Germania natam discere Gallice, ut loquatur cum his qui sciunt Gallice; cur igitur habetur indecorum discere Latine, ut quotidie confabuletur cum tot autoribus tam facundis, tam eruditis, tam sapientibus, tam fidis consultoribus? Certe mihi quantulumcunque cerebri est, malim in bonis studiis consumere, quam in precibus sine mente dictis, in pernoctibus conviviis, in exhauriendis capacibus pateris, &c.*

"I have tired your Lordship, and too long delayed to subscribe myself

"Your Lordship's
"Most respectful and obliged
"M. PIERREPONT."

She read with avidity everything she could find, and forgot nothing; retaining, amidst the mass of perhaps comparatively worthless literature, whatever was worthy of thought and memory. Thus she devoured the ponderous, fashionable romances of the day, which it is surprising so lively a genius could have endured for an hour. Cyrus, Clelia, Cassandra, and other narratives equally lengthened, were the delight of her leisure moments, stolen from Epictetus, and the French and Italian classics. Her time must have been fully occupied with her studies, amusements and domestic duties, for none of them were neglected by her. She was expected by her father to receive his company, and to carve, as the fashion then was, for the whole assembled guests at dinner; for which reason she took lessons in that art three times a-week, to enable her to discharge the office with grace. How she found leisure for all these employments is inconceivable! It is true that some part of her time was spent in the country, at Thoresby and at Acton; and there she had, of course, better opportunities of following the bent of her mind, and becoming daily more instructed, and more fit to shine in society.

One of her chief friends was Anne, daughter of Mr. Sidney Wortley Montagu, second son of Admiral Montagu, first Earl of Sandwich, an amiable and accomplished young woman, to whom she seemed greatly attached, and who returned her friendship very warmly, during the brief years that fate allowed to their intercourse, for Anne Wortley's life was unhappily of short duration.

The following correspondence exhibits the nature of their intimacy, and shows the opinion which all her friends held in regard to her acquirements :—

TO MRS. WORTLEY.

"August 8, 1709.

"I shall run mad—with what heart can people write, when they believe their letters will never be received? I have already writ you a very long scrawl, but it seems it never came to your hands; I cannot bear to be accused of coldness by one whom I shall love all my life. This will, perhaps, miscarry as the last did; how unfortunate am I if it does! You will think I forget you, who are never out of my thoughts. You will fancy me stupid enough to neglect your letters, when they are the only pleasures of my solitude: in short, you will call me ungrateful and insensible, when I esteem you as I ought, in esteeming you above all the world. If I am not quite so unhappy as I imagine, and you do receive this, let me know it as soon as you can; for till then I shall be in terrible uneasiness; and let me beg you for the future, if you do not receive letters very constantly from me, imagine the post-boy killed, imagine the mail burnt, or some other strange accident; you can imagine nothing so impossible as that I forget you, my dear Mrs. Wortley. I know no pretence I have to your good opinion but my hearty desiring it; I wish I had that imagination you talk of, to render me a fitter correspondent for you, who can write so well on everything. I am now so much alone, I have leisure to pass whole days in reading, but am not at all proper for so delicate an employment as chusing you books. Your own fancy will better direct you. My study at present is nothing but dictionaries and grammars. I am trying whether it be possible to learn without a master; I am not certain (and dare hardly hope) I shall make any great progress; but I find the study so diverting, I am not only easy, but pleased with the solitude that indulges it. I forget there is such a place as London, and wish for no company but yours. You see, my dear, in making my pleasures consist of these unfashionable diversions, I am not of the number who cannot be easy out of the mode. I believe more follies are committed out of complaisance to the world, than in following our own inclinations—Nature is seldom in the wrong, custom always; it is with some regret I follow it in all the impertinencies of dress; the compliance is so trivial it comforts me; but I am amazed to see it consulted even in the most important occasions of our lives; and that people of good sense in other things can make their happiness consist in the opinions of others, and sacrifice every thing in the desire of appearing in fashion. I call all people who fall in love with furniture, clothes, and equipage, of this number, and I look upon them as no less in the wrong than when they were five years old, and doated on shells, pebbles, and hobby-horses: I believe you will expect this letter to be dated from the other world, for sure I am you never heard an inhabitant of this talk so before. I suppose you expect, too, I should conclude with begging pardon for this extreme tedious, and very nonsensical letter; quite contrary, I think you will be obliged to me for it. I could not better show my great concern for your reproaching me with neglect I knew myself innocent of, than proving myself mad in three pages.

"My sister says a great deal about Mrs. K.; but besides my having forgot it, the paper is at an end."

TO THE LADY MARY PIERREPONT.

"August 20th, 1709.

"Dear Lady Mary will pardon my vanity; I could not forbear reading to a Cambridge Doctor that was with me, a few of those lines that did not make me happy till this week: where you talk of dictionaries and grammars, he stopped me, and said, 'the reason why you had more wit than any man, was, that your mind had never been encumbered with any of these tedious authors; that Cowley never submitted to the rules of grammar, and therefore excelled all of his own time in learning, as well as in wit; that without them, you would read with pleasure in two or three months; but that if you persisted in the use of them, you would throw away your Latin in a year or two, and the commonwealth would have reason to mourn; whereas, if I could prevail with you, it would be be bound to thank you for a brighter ornament than any it can boast of.' It is not because I am public-spirited, that I could not delay telling you what I believe would make you succeed in your attempt; nor can I positively affirm it proceeds from fondness, but rather admiration. I think I love you too well to envy you; but the love of one's self is in all so powerful, that it may be a doubt whether the most violent passion would prevail with me to forward you in the pursuit, did I imagine you wanted that accomplishment to set you above me. But since, without any addition, as you now are I know there is so little hopes of coming near you, that if I loved you not at all, I should not be averse to raising you higher; nor can all the good things you say of me make me think the distance to be less, and yet I must own they are very pleasing, notwithstanding you say that when you wrote this last you were *mad*, which brings to my mind the other in which you say you are *dull*, so that you own when you are *yourself*, you have no such thoughts of me. Nay, should you in another, to convince me that you are in an interval, by being sensible that those shining qualities in you were designed to give splendour to a court, please the multitude, and do honour to nature,—should you tell me your recovery of your reason had not altered your opinion of me, there would still be a scruple; and yet in spite of that too, your compliments would please. You may remember you once told me it was as easy to write kindly to a hobby-horse, as to a woman, nay, or a man. I should know too how diverting a scene it is (I forget where I met with it, but you can tell me) to make a ploughman sit on a throne, and fancy he is an emperor. However, 'tis a cheat so pleasing, I cannot help indulging it; and to keep off the evil day as long as I can of being deceived, shall remain with truth and passion,

"Yours,
ANNE WORTLEY."

TO MRS. WORTLEY.

"Aug. 21, 1709.

"When I said it cost nothing to write tenderly, I believe I spoke of another sex; I am sure not of myself: 'tis not in my power, (I would to God it was!) to hide a kindness where I have one, or dissemble it where I have none. I cannot help answering your letter this minute, and telling you I infinitely love you, though, it may be, you'll call the one impertinence, and the other dissimulation; but you may think what you please of me, I must eternally think the same things of you.

"I hope my dear Mrs. Wortley's shewing my letter is in the same strain as her compliments, all meant for ralliery, and I am not to take it as a thing really so; but I'll give you as serious an answer as if 'twas all true.——

"When Mr. Cowley and other people (for I know several have learnt after the same manner) were in places where they had opportunity of being learned by word of mouth, I don't see any violent necessity of printed rules; but being where, from the top of the house to the bottom, not a creature in it understands so much as even good English, without the help of a dictionary or inspiration, I know no way of attaining to any language. Despairing of the last, I am forced to make use of the other, though I do verily believe I shall return to London the same ignorant soul I went from it; but the study is a present amusement. I must own I have vanity enough to fancy, if I had any body with me, without much trouble perhaps I might read.

"What do you mean by complaining I never write to you in the quiet situation of mind I do to other people? My dear, people never write calmly, but when they write indifferently. That I should ever do so to you, I take to be entirely impossible; I must be always very much pleased, or in very great affliction, as you tell me of your friendship, or unkindly doubt mine. I can never allow even prudence and sincerity to have any thing to do with one another, at least I have always found it so in myself, who being devoted to the one, had never the least tincture of the other. What I am now doing, is a very good proof of what I say, 'tis a plain undesigning truth—your friendship is the only happiness of my life; and whenever I lose it, I have nothing to do but to take one of my garters and search for a convenient beam. You see how absolutely necessary it is for me to preserve it. Prudence is at the very time saying to me, Are you mad, you won't send this dull, tedious, insipid, long letter to Mrs. Wortley, will you? 'tis the direct way to tire out her patience: if she serves you as you deserve, she will first laugh very heartily, then tear the letter, and never answer it, purely to avoid the plague of such another: will her good-nature for ever resist her judgment?—I hearken to these counsels, I allow 'em to be good, and then—I act quite contrary. No consideration can hinder me from telling you, my dear, dear Mrs.

Wortley, nobody ever was so entirely, so faithfully yours as

"M. P.

"I put in your lovers, for I don't allow it possible for a man to be so sincere as I am; if there was such a thing, though, you would find it; I submit therefore to your judgment.

"I had forgot to tell you that I writ a long letter, directed to Peterborough, last post; I hope you'll have it:—you see I forgot your judgment, to depend upon your goodness."

TO MRS. WORTLEY.

"Aug. 21, 1709.

"I am infinitely obliged to you, my dear Mrs. Wortley, for the wit, beauty, and other fine qualities, you so generously bestow upon me. Next to receiving them from Heaven, you are the person from whom I would chuse to receive gifts and graces: I am very well satisfied to owe them to your own delicacy of imagination, which represents to you the idea of a fine lady, and you have good-nature enough to fancy I am she. All this is mighty well, but you do not stop there; imagination is boundless. After giving me imaginary wit and beauty, you give me imaginary passions, and you tell me I'm in love: if I am, 'tis a perfect sin of ignorance, for I don't so much as know the man's name: I have been studying these three hours, and cannot guess who you mean. I passed the days of Nottingham races at Thorsby, without seeing, or even wishing to see one of the sex. Now, if I am in love, I have very hard fortune to conceal it so industriously from my own knowledge, and yet discover it so much to other people. 'Tis against all form to have such a passion as that, without giving one sigh for the matter. Pray tell me the name of him I love, that I may (according to the laudable custom of lovers,) sigh to the woods and groves hereabouts, and teach it to the echo. You see, being I am in love, I am willing to be so in order and rule; I have been turning over God knows how many books to look for precedents. Recommend an example to me; and, above all, let me know whether 'tis most proper to walk in the woods, encreasing the winds with my sighs, or to sit by a purling stream, swelling the rivulet with my tears; may be, both may do well in their turns:—but to be a minute serious, what do you mean by this reproach of inconstancy? I confess you give me several good qualities I have not, and I am ready to thank you for them, but then you must not take away those few I have. No, I will never exchange them: take back the beauty and wit you bestow upon me, leave me my own mediocrity of agreeableness and genius, but leave me also my sincerity, my constancy, and my plain dealing; 'tis all I have to recommend me to the esteem either of others or myself. How should I despise myself if I could think I was capable of either inconstancy or deceit! I know not how I may appear to other people, nor how much my face may belie my heart, but I know that I never was or can be guilty of dissimulation or inconstancy—you will think this vain, but 'tis all that I pique myself upon. Tell me you believe me, and repent of your harsh censure. Tell it me in pity to my uneasiness, for you are one of those few people about whose good opinion I am in pain. I have always took so little care to please the generality of the world, that I am never mortified or delighted by its reports, which is a piece of stoicism born with me; but I cannot be one minute easy while you think ill of

"Your faithful
M. P.

"This letter is a good deal grave, and, like other grave things, dull; but I won't ask pardon for what I can't help."

Anne Wortley's brother Edward was a reserved and learned young man, somewhat grave, and, as it would seem, pedantic; the youthful companion of his sister had no attractions for him, entirely absorbed as he was in study; and considering them merely as either fashionable ladies of the day, capable of talking of nothing but gaiety and dress, or even if otherwise, mere domestic gossips, whose minds never rose above the petty daily duties of a household. When he first saw Lady Mary Pierrepont he might have been inclined to class her with another set then greatly in vogue, namely, the race of finished coquettes; and viewing her in that light, he probably felt rather hostility to her than any softer sentiment. That she was indeed a coquette there can be little doubt; she had been accustomed to adulation from infancy, and she desired and expected to see all whom she honoured with her regard, instantly at her feet: in this she was seldom disappointed, and it must have given her her first mortification, to observe the contemptuous insensibility manifested by the brother of her friend, who, her judgment told her, was worthy to become her slave.

She, of course, resolved to take the first opportunity to convince this stoic that she had the power of moving him, if she did but attempt to do so; and, on one occasion, when Mr. Wortley, who was strongly attached to his sister, had remained in her apartments longer than was his wont, until her usual visitors were announced, he found good manners prevented him from leaving their society immediately, and consequently he condescended to enter into and join in the conversation which ensued. This was Lady Mary's moment for triumph: she engaged him in converse, and at once riveted with her wit, readiness, brilliancy, and, above all—learning. He discovered, to his amazement, that eyes so bright could employ their glances on erudite and serious books,—that an imagination so vivid could pause upon abstruse reflections,—that beauty so exquisite could neglect itself to acquire information; in a word, he found wisdom and genius, sense and taste, combined with grace and elegance, and the most varied charms of person and manner.

How could the heart of the young scholar resist these combined attractions! he did not even attempt to do so *in time,* and his peace was lost. He never again contemptuously shunned his sister's circle, nor coldly listened to her praises of her charming friend, whom he found far excelling the flattering picture she drew: he did not banish himself from her society, nor hastily withdraw, as of old, when lady visitors were announced. On the contrary, he lingered in her path; listened with delighted surprise to all she said; and the gratified beauty soon saw her conquest complete.

On one occasion something had led to the mention of Quintus Curtius, which she said she had not read: Wortley, charmed to find an occasion to show his admiration, seized the opportunity, and sent her a fine edition of the author, with these lines written in the first leaf:—

> "Beauty like this had vanquished Persia shown,
> The Macedon had laid his empire down,
> And polished Greece obeyed a barbarous throne.
> Had wit so bright adorned a Grecian dame,
> The am'rous youth had lost his thirst for fame,
> Nor distant India sought through Syria's plain;
> But to the Muses' stream with her had run,
> And thought her lover more than Ammon's son."

Mr. Wortley appears not to have been a man of brilliant parts, but he had sound judgment, and, in one respect, his ambition was the same as that of Lady Mary, namely, the wish to do good, and the advancement of learning in his native country. He introduced in Parliament several bills which were formed on a truly patriotic basis: one was "For the Naturalization of Foreign Protestants;" others "For limiting the number of Offices in the House of Commons, and for securing the Freedom of Parliament," and "For the Encouragement of Learning, and the securing the *Property of Copies of Books to the right Owners thereof.*"

It is a singular reflection, that more than a century has elapsed since this last important and humane question was moved, and it is only now beginning to gain attention.

He was the friend of Addison, and held in the highest esteem for his talents as an orator. That his judgment was looked up to, the following letter from the author of the "Spectator" is a proof:—

TO EDWARD WORTLEY MONTAGU, ESQ.

"Dear Sir,

"Being very well pleased with this day's 'Spectator,' I cannot forbear sending you one of them, and desiring your opinion of the story in it. When you have a son I shall be glad to be his Leontine, as my circumstances will probably be like his. I have within this twelvemonth lost a place of 2000*l.* per annum, an estate in the Indies of 14,000*l.*, and, what is more than all the rest, my mistress. Hear this, and wonder at my philosophy. I find they are going to take away my Irish place from me too; to which I must add, that I have just resigned my fellowship, and the stocks sink every day. If you have any hints or subjects, pray send me a paper full. I long to talk an evening with you. I believe I shall not go for Ireland this summer, and perhaps would take a month with you, if I knew where. Lady Bellasise is very much your humble servant. Dick Steele and I often remember you.

"I am, dear sir, your's eternally, &c.

J. Addison.

"July 21, 1711."

TO JOSEPH ADDISON, ESQ.

"Wortley, July 28, 1711.

"Notwithstanding your disappointments, I had much rather be in your circumstances than my own. The strength of your constitution would make you happier than all who are not equal to you in that, though it contributed nothing towards those other advantages that place you in the first rank of men. Since my fortune fell to me, I had reason to fancy I should be reduced to a very small income; I immediately retrenched my expenses, and lived for six months on fifty pounds as pleasantly as ever I did in my life, and could have lived for less than half that sum, and often entertained myself with the speech of Ofellus, in the second satire of the second book, and still think no man of understanding can be many days unhappy, if he does not want health: at present I take all the care I can to improve mine. This air is as proper for that as any I know, and we are so remote from all troublesome neighbours and great towns, that a man can think of nothing long but country amusements, or his books; and if you would change the course of your thoughts, you will scarce fail of effecting it here. I am in some fear I shall be forced to town for four or five days, and then we may come down together; if I stay I shall let you know it in a week or ten days, and hope to see you very soon. You were never in possession of any thing you love but your places, and those you could not call your own. After I had read what you say about them, I could not take pleasure in the 'Spectator' you sent, but thought it a very good one. In two months, or a little more, I think I must go the Newcastle journey. You told me you should like it; if you do not, perhaps we may contrive how you may pass your time here. I am not sure we shall easily have leave to lodge out of this house; but we may eat in the woods every day, if you like it, and nobody here will expect any sort of ceremony.

"Your's ever,
EDWARD WORTLEY MONTAGU."

For two years the intimacy of Lady Mary and Mr. Wortley continued to increase: he had now engaged his affections too far to recede, although, by the letters which passed between them, and which they afterwards agreed to keep as memorials of those early days of attachment,—always the most enchanting recollections of existence,—it is evident that he repented having allowed himself to be conquered by one whose too great fondness for admiration was a continual torture to his sensitive mind. Lord Wharncliffe, in his excellent memoirs of his charming ancestress, observes, that this collection of letters are—

"Very different from what a romance writer would have framed: on his side no longer complimentary, but strikingly expressive of a real strong passion, combated in vain by a mind equally strong, which yielded to it against its conviction and against its will: '*Celui que aime plus qu'il ne voudrait,*' says a French author, is, after all, a person on whom love has taken the fastest hold. They were perpetually on the point of breaking altogether: he felt and knew that they suited each other very ill: he saw, or thought he saw, his rivals encouraged if not preferred: he was more affronted than satisfied with her assurance of a *sober* esteem and regard: and yet every struggle to get free did but end where it set out, leaving him still a captive, galled by his chain, but unable to sever one link of it effectually."

Probably the following is one of Lady Mary's earliest letters to Mr. Wortley, while the "lovers' quarrels and fluctuations" were going on, which, however exciting at the time, always promise ill for happiness hereafter. Miss Wortley, it seems, by the allusion in the letter, was already dead when it was written:—

TO E. WORTLEY MONTAGU, ESQ.

"Perhaps you'll be surprized at this letter; I have had many debates with myself before I could resolve upon it. I know it is not acting in form, but I do not look upon you as I do upon the rest of the world, and by what I do for *you*, you are not to judge of my manner of acting with others. You are brother to a woman I tenderly loved; my protestations of friendship are not like other people's, I never speak but what I mean, and when I say I love, 'tis for ever. I had that real concern for Mrs. Wortley, I look with some regard on every one that is related to her. This and my long acquaintance with you may in some measure excuse what I am doing. I am surprized at one of the 'Tatlers' you send me; is it possible to have any sort of esteem for a person one believes capable of having such trifling inclinations? Mr. Bickerstaff has very wrong notions of our sex. I can say there are some of us that despise charms of show, and all the pageantry of greatness, perhaps with more ease than any of the philosophers. In contemning the world, they seem to take pains to contemn it; we despise it, without taking the pains to read lessons of morality to make us do it. At least I know I have always looked upon it with contempt, without being at the expence of one serious reflection to oblige me to it. I carry the matter yet farther; was I to choose of 2,000*l.* a-year, or twenty thousand, the first would be my choice. There is something of an unavoidable *embarras* in making what is called a great figure in the world; (it) takes off from the happiness of life; I hate the noise and hurry inseparable from great estates and titles, and look upon both as blessings which ought only to be given to fools, for 'tis only to them that they are blessings. The pretty fellows you speak of, I own entertain me sometimes; but is it impossible to be diverted with what one despises? I can laugh at a puppet-show, and at the same time know that it is not worth my attention or regard. General notions are generally wrong. Ignorance and folly are thought the best foundations for virtue, as if not knowing what a good wife is was necessary to make one so. I confess that can never be my way of reasoning; as I always forgive an *injury* when not done out of malice, I can never think myself *obliged* by what is done without design. Give me leave to say it (I know it sounds vain) I know how to make a man of sense happy; but then that man must know how to contribute something towards it himself. I have so much esteem for you, I should be very sorry to hear you was unhappy; but for the world I would not be the instrument of making you so; which (of the humours you are) is hardly to be avoided if I am your wife. You distrust me —I can neither be easy, nor loved, where I am distrusted. Nor do I believe your passion for me is what you pretend it; at least I am sure was I in love I could not talk as you do. Few women would have wrote so plain as I have done; but to dissemble is among the things I never do. I take more pains to approve my conduct to myself than to the world; and would not have to accuse myself of a minute's deceit. I wish I loved you enough to devote myself to be for ever miserable, for the pleasure of a day's happiness. I cannot resolve upon it. You must think otherwise of me, or not at all.

" I don't enjoin you to burn this letter, I know you will. 'Tis the first I ever wrote to one of your sex, and shall be the last. You may never expect another. I resolve against all correspondence of the kind; my resolutions are seldom made, and never broken.

" *To Mr. Edward Wortley Montagu, at Wortley,*
near Sheffield, Yorkshire."

The answer of Mr. Wortley to this letter must have been such as to annoy the fair writer considerably, as it is immediately followed by another, in spite of her resolves—*which were never broken*—to write to him no more.

TO E. WORTLEY MONTAGU, ESQ.

"Reading over your letter as fast as ever I could, and answering it with the same ridiculous precipitation, I find one part of it escaped my sight, and the other I mistook in several places. Yours was dated the 10th of August; it came not hither till the 20th. You say something of a packet-boat, &c. which makes me uncertain whether you'll receive my letter, and frets me heartily. Kindness, you say, would be your destruction. In my opinion, this is something contradictory to some other expressions. People talk of being in love just as widows do of affliction. Mr. Steele has observed, in one of his plays, 'that the most passionate among them have always calmness enough to drive a hard bargain with the upholders.' I never knew a lover that would not willingly secure his interest as well as his mistress; or, if one must be abandoned, had not the prudence (among all his distractions) to consider, that a woman was but a woman, and money was a thing of more real merit than the whole sex put together.

Your letter is to tell me, you should think yourself undone if you married me; but if I would be so tender as to confess I should break my heart if you did not, then you'd consider whether you would or no; but yet you hoped you should not. I take this to be the right interpretation of—even your kindness can't destroy me of a sudden—I hope I am not in your power—I would give a good deal to be satisfied, &c.

"As to writing—that any woman would do who thought she writ well. Now I say, no woman of common sense would. At best, 'tis but doing a silly thing well, and I think it is much better not to do a silly thing at all. You compare it to dressing. Suppose the comparison just: perhaps the Spanish dress would become my face very well; yet the whole town would condemn me for the highest extravagance if I went to court in it, though it improved me to a miracle. There are a thousand things, not ill in themselves, which custom makes unfit to be done. This is to convince you I am so far from applauding my own conduct, my conscience flies in my face every time I think on't. The generality of the world have a great indulgence to their own follies: without being a jot wiser than my neighbours, I have the peculiar misfortune to know and condemn all the wrong things I do.

"You beg to know whether I would not be out of humour. The expression is modest enough; but that is not what you mean. In saying I could be easy, I have already said I should not be out of humour: but you would have me say I am violently in love; that is, finding you think better of me than you desire, you would have me give you a just cause to contemn me. I doubt much whether there is a creature in the world humble enough to do that. I should not think you more unreasonable if you were in love with my face, and asked me to disfigure it to make you easy. I have heard of some nuns that made use of that expedient to secure their own happiness; but, amongst all the popish saints and martyrs, I never read of one whose charity was sublime enough to make themselves deformed, or ridiculous, to restore their lovers to peace and quietness. In short, if nothing can content you but despising me heartily, I am afraid I shall be always so barbarous as to wish you may esteem me as long as you live.

"M. P."

This spirited letter vexed the lover, who could not endure to acknowledge the influence of the fair tyrant, whose words he felt to be true, and he replied angrily and harshly. Her next shows that she was getting impatient of the tyranny he himself assumed over her, and she tells him, with the usual inconsistency of persons in her position, that she writes for the last time:—

TO E. W. MONTAGU, ESQ.

"I intended to make no answer to your letter; it was something very ungrateful, and I resolved to give over all thoughts of you. I could easily have performed that resolve some time ago, but then you took pains to please me; now you have brought me to esteem you, you make use of that esteem to give me uneasiness; and I have the displeasure of seeing I esteem a man that dislikes me. Farewell then: since you will have it so, I renounce all the ideas I have so long flattered myself with, and will entertain my fancy no longer with the imaginary pleasure of pleasing you. How much wiser are all those women I have despised than myself! In placing their happiness in trifles, they have placed it in what is attainable. I fondly thought fine clothes and gilt coaches, balls, operas, and public adoration, rather the fatigues of life; and that true happiness was justly defined by Mr. Dryden (pardon the romantic air of repeating verses), when he says,

'Whom Heav'n would bless, it does from pomp remove,
And makes their wealth in privacy and love.'

These notions had corrupted my judgment as much as Mrs. Biddy Tipkin's. According to this scheme, I proposed to pass my life with you. I yet do you the justice to believe, if any man could have been contented with this manner of living, it would have been you. Your indifference to me does not hinder me from thinking you capable of tenderness, and the happinesses of friendship; but I find it is not in me you'll ever have them; you think me all that is detestable; you accuse me of want of sincerity and generosity. To convince you of your mistake, I'll show you the last extremes of both.

"While I foolishly fancied you loved me, (which I confess I had never any great reason for, more than that I wished it,) there is no condition of life I could not have been happy in with you, so very much I liked you—I might say loved, since it is the last thing I'll ever say to you. This is telling you sincerely my greatest weakness; and now I will oblige you with a new proof of generosity—I'll never see you more. I shall avoid all public places; and this is the last letter I shall send. If you write, be not displeased if I send it back unopened. I shall force my inclinations to oblige yours; and remember that you have told me I could not oblige you more than by refusing you. Had I intended ever to see you again, I durst not have sent this letter. Adieu."

The father of Lady Mary received the proposals of Mr. Wortley for his daughter favourably at first, but when settlements came to be talked of the whole scene changed, and he broke off the match in great indignation. Mr. Wortley had peculiar notions regarding the practice of entailing property: he entirely disapproved of settling the whole estate on an elder son; in fact, his notions and those which have recently obtained in France were the same, and he honestly resolved to maintain the principles he had advocated, and refused to settle his estates in the usual manner, on the future heir he might have. His argument was singular enough, and seemed to be dictated by a "second sight," considering the character of the son who was afterwards born to him: he offered to make as good a provision for his wife as he could afford, but "refused to settle his landed property upon a son who, *for aught he knew, might prove unworthy to possess it—might be a spendthrift, an idiot, or a villain.*" Lord Dorchester (the duke had then that title), on the other hand, said that "these philosophic theories were very fine, but *his* grandchildren should not run the risk of being left beggars."

Poor Lady Mary began now to feel real uneasiness, as her letters to her lover about this period prove: in the following there is evidence of wounded feelings as well as affection:—

TO E. W. MONTAGU, ESQ.

"I thought to return no answer to your letter, but I find I am not so wise as I thought myself. I cannot forbear fixing my mind a little on that expression, though perhaps the only insincere one in your whole letter—I would die to be secure of your heart, though but for a moment:—were this but true, what is there I would not do to secure you?

"I will state the case to you as plainly as I can; and then ask yourself if you use me well. I have shewed, in every action of my life, an esteem for you that at least challenges a grateful regard. I have trusted my reputation in your hands; I have made no scruple of giving you, under my own hand, an assurance of my friendship. After all this, I exact nothing from you: if you find it inconvenient for your affairs to take so small a fortune, I desire you to sacrifice nothing to me; I pretend no tie upon your honour: but, in recompence for so clear and so disinterested a proceeding, must I ever receive injuries and ill usage?

"I have not the usual pride of my sex; I can bear being told I am in the wrong, but tell it me gently. Perhaps I have been indiscreet; I came young into the hurry of the world; a great innocence and an undesigning gaiety may possibly have been construed coquetry and a desire of being followed, though never meant by me. I cannot answer for the observations that may be made on me: all who are malicious attack the careless and defenceless: I own myself to be both. I know not any thing I can say more to shew my perfect desire of pleasing you and making you easy, than to proffer to be confined with you in what manner you please. Would any woman but me renounce all the world for one? or would any man but you be insensible of such a proof of sincerity?

"M. P."

Lady Mary prudently resolved to break off her intercourse with Mr. Wortley when she found it displeasing to her father, but as he continued to write and to entreat her answers, she was not able to refuse. The following is more sensible and true than tender, and her lover probably thought so, and much as he professed to admire reason, would have willingly dispensed with it in favour of a little more passion.

TO E. W. MONTAGU, ESQ.

"I have this minute received your two letters. I know not how to direct to you, whether to London or the country; or, if in the country, to Durham or Wortley. 'Tis very likely you'll never receive this. I hazard a great deal if it falls into other hands, and I wrote for all that. I wish, with all my soul, I thought as you do; I endeavour to convince myself by your arguments, and am sorry my reason is so obstinate, not to be deluded into an opinion, that 'tis impossible a man can esteem a woman. I suppose I should then be very easy at your thoughts of me; I should thank you for the wit and beauty you give me, and not be angry at the follies and weaknesses; but, to my infinite affliction, I can believe neither one nor t'other. One part of my character is not so good, nor t'other so bad, as you fancy it. Should we ever live together, you would be disappointed both ways; you would find an easy equality of temper you do not expect, and a thousand faults you do not imagine. You think, if you married me, I should be passionately fond of you one month, and of somebody else the next: neither would happen. I can esteem, I can be a friend, but I don't know whether I can love. Expect all that is complaisant and easy, but never what is fond, in me. You judge very wrong of my heart, when you suppose me capable of views of interest, and that any thing could oblige me to flatter any body. Was I the most indigent creature in the world, I should answer you as I do now, without adding or diminishing. I am incapable of art, and 'tis because I will not be capable of it. Could I deceive one minute, I should never regain my own good opinion; and who could bear to live with one they despised?

"If you can resolve to live with a companion that will have all the deference due to your superiority of good sense, and that your proposals can be agreeable to those on whom I depend, I have nothing to say against them.

"As to travelling, 'tis what I should do with great pleasure, and could easily quit London upon your account; but a retirement in the country is not so disagreeable to me, as I know a few months would make it tiresome to you. Where people are tied for life, 'tis their mutual interest not to grow weary of one another. If I had all the personal charms that I want, a face is too slight a foundation for happiness. You would be soon tired with seeing every day the same thing. Where you saw nothing else, you would have leisure to remark all the defects; which would encrease in proportion as the novelty lessened, which is always a great charm. I should have the displeasure of seeing a coldness, which, though I could not reasonably blame you for, being involuntary, yet it would render me uneasy; and the more, because I know a love may be revived which absence, inconstancy, or even infidelity, has extinguished; but there is no returning from a *dégoût* given by satiety.

"I should not chuse to live in a croud: I could be very well pleased to be in London, without making a great figure, or seeing above eight or nine agreeable people. Apartments, table, &c. are things that never come into my head. But I will never think of any thing without the consent of my family, and advise you not to fancy a happiness in entire solitude, which you would find only fancy.

"Make no answer to this, if you can like me on my own terms. 'Tis not to me you must make the proposals; if not, to what purpose is our correspondence?

"However, preserve me your friendship, which I think of with a great deal of pleasure, and some vanity. If ever you see me married, I flatter myself you'll see a conduct you would not be sorry your wife should imitate.

"M. P."

Alas! Lady Mary was no stronger than her sex; after all her good resolves, after all the strange prophetic warnings of her lover, which offended, piqued, and irritated her, such as sentences like these,—

"Every time you see me gives me a fresh proof of your not caring for me;"—"If you can't find out that you are going to be unhappy, ask your sister, who agrees with you in every thing else, and she will convince you of your rashness in this: she knows *you don't care for me, and that you will like me less and less every year, perhaps every day of your life;*"—"When you hear of all my objections to you and to myself, you will resolve against me;"—"You will think you might have been happier: never engage with a man unless you propose to yourself the highest satisfaction from him and none other;"—on the eve of uniting herself to this *unsatisfactory* lover, poor Lady Mary writes the following hurried billet, which might have been the production of a mind far less *reasoning*, and much more weak:—

TO E. W. MONTAGU, ESQ.

"Friday night.

"I tremble for what we are doing.—Are you sure you shall love me for ever? Shall we never repent? I fear and I hope. I foresee all that will happen on this occasion. I shall incense my family in the highest degree. The generality of the world will blame my conduct, and the relations and friends of ——— will invent a thousand stories of me; yet 'tis possible, you may recompense every thing to me. In this letter, which I am fond of, you promise me all that I wish. Since I writ so far, I received your Friday letter. I will be only yours, and I will do what you please."

Lady Mary would probably never have thought herself driven to the necessity of eloping, as she did, with Mr. Wortley, but for her father's harshness and injudicious conduct. He had, after rejecting Mr. Wortley, accepted another offer for his daughter, without in any way consulting her inclinations: he contented himself with issuing his imperative commands that she should become the wife of the man whom he had fixed on, he ordered the wedding clothes to be bought, arranged everything, and imagined that his will was law.

When Lord Dorchester found his authority set at nought, his rage knew no bounds: and her sister, Lady Frances,* who was in her confidence, was so terrified at his violence, that, supposing he would insist on examining Lady Mary's papers, she hastily burned all she could find, amongst others, a journal which her sister had been in the habit of keeping, which she much regretted afterwards; and which would, no doubt, have been a valuable addition to that which is already known of her, as it would have detailed her earliest impressions, and the first dawnings of her remarkable intellect.

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* Afterwards married to the Earl of Mar.

Lady Mary, soon after her marriage, resumed her habit of writing a diary, which her daughter, Lady Bute, never allowed to go out of her own hands, and afterwards destroyed.

Scarcely was Lady Mary a wife—she married in 1713—than, as if Mr. Wortley had resolved to prove his own predictions true, he seems to have left his charming wife to too much solitude, and to singular neglect, for she almost immediately begins to reproach him with his silence, complaining of being left with uninteresting people. Her first letter as a wife runs thus:—

TO E. W. MONTAGU, ESQ.

" Walling Wells, Oct. 22.

" I don't know very well how to begin; I am perfectly unacquainted with a proper matrimonial stile. After all, I think 'tis best to write as if we were not married at all. I lament your absence, as if you were still my lover, and I am impatient to hear you have got safe to Durham, and that you have fixed a time for your return.

" I have not been very long in this family; and I fancy myself in that described in the 'Spectator.' The good people here look upon their children with a fondness that more than recompenses their care of them. I don't perceive much distinction in regard to their merits; and when they speak sense or nonsense, it affects the parents with almost the same pleasure. My friendship for the mother, and kindness for Miss Biddy, make me endure the squalling of Miss Nanny and Miss Mary with abundance of patience; and my foretelling the future conquests of the eldest daughter, makes me very well with the family.—I don't know whether you will presently find out that this seeming impertinent account is the tenderest expressions of my love to you; but it furnishes my imagination with agreeable pictures of our future life; and I flatter myself with the hopes of one day enjoying with you the same satisfactions; and that, after as many years together, I may see you retain the same fondness for me as I shall certainly do for you, when the noise of a nursery may have more charms for us than the music of an opera.

"Amusements such as these are the sure effect of my sincere love, since 'tis the nature of the passion to entertain the mind with pleasures in prospect; and I check myself when I grieve for your absence, by remembering how much reason I have to rejoice in the hope of passing my whole life with you. A good fortune not to be valued!—I am afraid of telling you that I return thanks for it to Heaven, because you will charge me with hypocrisy; but you are mistaken: I assist every day at public prayers in this family, and never forget in my private ejaculations how much I owe to Heaven for making me yours.

"M. W. MONTAGU.

"Tis candle-light, or I should not conclude so soon. Pray, my love, begin at the top, and read till you come to the bottom."

This is soon followed by a letter complaining of his silence.

TO E. W MONTAGU, ESQ.

[No date.]

"I am at present in so much uneasiness, my letter is not likely to be intelligible, if it at all resembles the confusion of my head. I sometimes imagine you not well, and sometimes that you think it of small importance to write, or that greater matters have taken up your thoughts. This last imagination is too cruel for me. I will rather fancy your letter has miscarried, though I find little probability to think so. I know not what to think, and am near being distracted, amongst my variety of dismal apprehensions. I am very ill company to the good people of the house, who all bid me make you their compliments. Mr. White begins your health twice every day. You don't deserve all this if you can be so entirely forgetful of all this part of the world. I am peevish with you by fits, and divide my time between anger and sorrow, which are equally troublesome to me. 'Tis the most cruel thing in the world, to think one has reason to complain of what one loves. How can you be so careless?—is it because you don't love writing? You should remember I want to know you are safe at Durham. I shall imagine you have had some fall from your horse, or ill accident by the way, without regard to probability; there is nothing too extravagant for a woman's and a lover's fears. Did you receive my last letter? if you did not, the direction is wrong, you won't receive this, and my question is in vain. I find I begin to talk nonsense, and 'tis time to leave off. Pray, my dear, write to me, or I shall be very mad."

It seems hard that the beautiful, accomplished, admired Lady Mary, should have occasion, before the first year of her marriage was ended, to express herself to her husband in the following desponding strain:—

TO E. W. MONTAGU, ESQ.

[Dated by Mr. Wortley, 24th November.]

"I have taken up and laid down my pen several times, very much unresolved in what style I ought to write to you: for once I suffer my inclination to get the better of my reason. I have not oft opportunities of indulging myself, and I will do it in this one letter. I know very well that nobody was ever teized into a liking: and 'tis perhaps harder to revive a past one, than to overcome an aversion; but I cannot forbear any longer telling you, I think you use me very unkindly. I don't say so much of your absence, as I should do if you was in the country and I in London; because I would not have you believe, that I am impatient to be in town, when I say I am impatient to be with you; but I am very sensible I parted with you in July, and 'tis now the middle of November. As if this was not hardship enough, you do not tell me you are sorry for it. You write seldom, and with so much indifference as shews you hardly think of me at all. I complain of ill health, and you only say you hope 'tis not so bad as I make it. You never enquire after your child. I would fain flatter myself you have more kindness for me and him than you express; but I reflect with grief that a man that is ashamed of passions that are natural and reasonable, is generally proud of those that are shameful and silly.

"You should consider solitude, and spleen the consequence of solitude, is apt to give the most melancholy ideas, and there needs at least tender letters and kind expressions to hinder uneasinesses almost inseparable from absence. I am very sensible, how far I ought to be contented when your affairs oblige you to be without me. I would not have you do yourself any prejudice; but a little kindness will cost you nothing. I do not bid you lose any thing by hasting to see me, but I would have you think it a misfortune when we are asunder. Instead of that, you seem perfectly pleased with our separation, and indifferent how long it continues. When I reflect on your behaviour, I am ashamed of my own, and think I am playing the part of my Lady Winchester. At least be as generous as my lord; and as he made her an early confession of his aversion, own to me your inconstancy, and upon my word I will give you no more trouble about it. I have concealed as long as I can the uneasiness the nothingness of your letters have given me, under an affected indifference; but dissimulation always sits awkwardly upon me; I am weary of it; and must beg you to write to me no more, if you cannot bring yourself to write otherwise. Multiplicity of business or diversions may have engaged you, but all people find time to do what they have a mind to. If your inclination is gone, I had rather never receive a letter from you, than one which, in lieu of comfort for your absence, gives me a pain even beyond it. For my part, as 'tis my first, this is my last complaint, and your next of the kind shall go back enclosed to you in blank paper."

Again, Dec. 9, 1713:—

"When I gave myself to you, I gave up the very desire of pleasing the rest of the world, and am pretty indifferent about it. * * * I continue indifferently well, and endeavour as much as I can to preserve myself from spleen and melancholy; not for my own sake, I think that of little importance; but in the condition I am I believe it may be of very ill consequence, yet, *passing whole days alone as I do,* I do not always find it possible, and my constitution will sometimes get the better of my reason. Human nature itself, without any additional misfortunes, furnishes disagreeable meditations enough. * * * I lose all taste of this world, and I suffer myself to be bewitched by the charms of the spleen, though I know and foresee all the irremediable mischiefs arising from it. * * * I do not enjoin you to read this letter—make no scruple of flinging it into the fire at the first dull line."

TO E. W. MONTAGU, ESQ.

[No date.]

"I am alone, without any amusement to take up my thoughts. I am in circumstances in which melancholy is apt to prevail even over all amusements, dispirited and alone, and you write me quarrelling letters.

"I hate complaining; 'tis no sign I am easy that I do not trouble you with my head-aches, and my spleen; to be reasonable one should never complain but when one hopes redress. A physician should be the only confidant of bodily pains; and for pains of the mind, they should never be spoke of but to them that can and will relieve 'em. Should I tell you that I am uneasy, that I am out of humour, and out of patience, should I see you half an hour the sooner? I believe you have kindness enough for me to be very sorry, and so you would tell me; and things remain in their primitive state; I chuse to spare you that pain; I would always give you pleasure. I know you are ready to tell me that I do not ever keep to these good maxims. I confess I often speak impertinently;

but I always repent of it. My last stupid letter was not come to you, before I would have had it back again had it been in my power; such as it was, I beg your pardon for it. I did not expect that my Lord Pierrepont would speak at all in our favour, much less shew zeal upon that occasion, that never shewed any in his life. I have writ every post, and you accuse me without reason. I can't imagine how they should miscarry; perhaps you have by this time received two together. Adieu! je suis à vous de tout mon cœur."

She even appears to be in want of money as well as sick and melancholy, for she writes:—

"I wish you would write again to Mr. Phipps, for I don't hear of any money, and *am in the utmost necessity for it.*"

What can be thought of the husband who could leave a young wife, just about to become a mother, in such circumstances?

The next uneasiness that Lady Mary was doomed to undergo was the sickly nature of her child. Fearing his death—

"I cannot," she says, "overcome myself so far as to think of parting with him with the resignation that I ought to do. I hope and beg of God, that he *may live to be a comfort to us both.* They tell me there is nothing extraordinary in the want of teeth at his age, but his weakness makes me very apprehensive: he is almost never out of my sight. Mrs. Bêhn says that the cold bath is the best medicine for weak children, but I am very fearful, *and unwilling to try any hazardous remedies.* He is very cheerful and full of play."

The death of her only brother, young Lord Kingston, of the small-pox, was a severe shock to her feelings, for she seems to have entertained for him the sincerest affection, and to have lamented his death in the bitterest terms, considering that her father, who had not forgiven her, had acted in the most cruel manner by not informing her of his illness.

On the death of Queen Anne Mr. Wortley was appointed a Lord of the Treasury, and Lady Mary was consequently brought again into public life, where there can be no doubt she was peculiarly calculated to shine. She attracted the notice of the Prince of Wales, so that, it is said, the Princess by no means approved of his expressed admiration; but, as she afterwards appeared at his father's court, with whom he was on bad terms, her jealousy ceased, as her husband took offence, and no longer admired the "well-dressed" beauty whom he formerly praised.

Lady Mary relates, in one of her journals, a ludicrous anecdote of herself at one of the royal parties, which were remarkable for their dulness :—

"She had on one evening a particular engagement that made her wish to be dismissed unusually early; she explained her reasons to the Duchess of Kendal, and the duchess informed the King, who, after a few complimentary remonstrances, appeared to acquiesce. But when he saw her about to take her leave, he began battling the point afresh, declaring it was unfair and perfidious to cheat him in such a manner, and saying many other fine things, in spite of which she at last contrived to escape. At the foot of the great stairs she ran against Secretary Craggs just coming in, who stopped her to inquire what was the matter? were the company put off? She told him why she went away, and how urgently the King had pressed her to stay longer; possibly dwelling on that head with some small complacency. Mr. Craggs made no remark; but, when he had heard all, snatching her up in his arms as a nurse carries a child, he ran full speed with her up-stairs, deposited her within the ante-chamber, kissed both her hands respectfully, (still not saying a word,) and vanished. The pages seeing her returned, they knew not how, hastily threw open the inner doors, and, before she had recovered her breath, she found herself again in the King's presence.

'*Ah! la re-voilà!*' cried he and the duchess, extremely pleased, and began thanking her for her obliging change of mind. The motto on all palace-gates is 'HUSH!' as Lady Mary very well knew. She had not to learn that mystery and caution ever spread their awful wings over the precincts of a court; where nobody knows what dire mischief may ensue from one unlucky syllable blabbed about anything, or about *nothing*, at a wrong time. But she was bewildered, fluttered, and entirely off her guard; so, beginning giddily with 'Oh Lord, sir! I have been so frightened!' she told his Majesty the whole story exactly as she would have told it to any one else. He had not done exclaiming, nor his Germans wondering, when again the door flew open, and the attendants announced Mr. Secretary Craggs, who, but that moment arrived, it should seem, entered with the usual obeisance, and as composed an air as if nothing had happened. '*Mais comment donc, Monsieur Craggs,*' said the King, going up to him, '*est-ce que c'est l'usage de ce pays de porter des belles dames comme un sac de froment?*' 'Is it the custom of this country to carry about fair ladies like a sack of wheat?' The minister, struck dumb by this unexpected attack, stood a minute or two not knowing which way to look; then, recovering his self-possession, answered with a low bow, 'There is nothing I would not do for your

Majesty's satisfaction.' This was coming off tolerably well; but he did not forgive the tell-tale culprit, in whose ear, watching his opportunity when the King turned from them, he muttered a bitter reproach, with a round oath to enforce it; 'which I durst not resent,' continued she, 'for I had drawn it upon myself; and indeed I was heartily vexed at my own imprudence.'"

The father of Lady Mary, now Duke of Kingston, marrying late in life *La Belle Bentinck*, the youngest daughter of the late Earl of Portland, made no addition to her happiness. Indeed it did not seem to enter into the consideration of the duke whether his conduct in any way contributed to their comfort: he exacted from his children the utmost reverence and observance according to the manners of the day, and does not appear to have troubled himself about returning them affection for their duty.

Lady Bute relates the circumstance of having seen her grandfather once only, with the following particulars:—

"Her mother was dressing, and she playing about the room, when there entered an elderly stranger of dignified appearance and still handsome, with the authoritative air of a person entitled to admittance at all times: upon which, to her great surprise, Lady Mary instantly starting up from the toilet table, dishevelled as she was, fell on her knees to ask his blessing."

The appearance of Lady Mary in the great world was the signal of her triumph: she was the star of fashion, the admired and imitated of all, and the envy of many. Her disappearance for a time from the theatre where she was formed to act a conspicuous figure had made her return the more brilliant. The romantic episode of her marriage added piquancy to her story; and her retirement in the country, which she evidently disliked, caused her own enjoyment of society to be more vivid, and consequently brought forth her dazzling qualities in more shining relief than before. All the wits of the day hastened to do her homage. At this time began her memorable friendship with Pope, which was, while it lasted, all that could charm and delight the mind of such a person as Lady Mary.

She, however, quitted the pleasures of a society which suited her to accompany her husband on an expedition which decided the future character of her life; for the circumstance awoke in her that passion for a foreign country which caused her afterwards to abandon her own, in order that she might enjoy it freely.

Mr. Wortley was, in 1716, appointed ambassador to Constantinople, and left England with his wife for that destination. Pope, then in the height of his sentimental admiration, thus writes to her on the occasion:—

> "May that person for whom you have left all the world be so just as to prefer you to all the world! I believe his good understanding has engaged him to do so hitherto, and I think his gratitude must for the future."

At the present day there does not appear much cause for gratitude, on the part of Mr. Wortley, that his lady should be willing to travel with him, but a journey through Europe at that time presented many inconveniences, perils, and dangers, and did certainly require some spirit to undertake; and it argued, besides, much attachment in a young and lovely woman quitting such a circle of admirers as Lady Mary left behind, to devote herself to the wishes of her husband. When once fairly on her journey, the active and observing mind of Lady Mary found nothing to regret in the step she had taken, but everything to rejoice at and enjoy, as most persons must feel, who have enlightened capacities, when new scenes open before them, and new characters become developed, such as existed formerly only in their vivid imaginations. Nothing was lost upon her; she made pictures of all she saw, could extract pleasure and amusement out of mere inconveniences, was never out of humour,—that great desideratum for most travellers,—and always sought for instruction wherever she came. Nothing was trite, nothing was worthless in her eyes that tended to throw a light upon the manners of nations with which she was unacquainted: she examined everything, described everything, and, being gifted by nature with a remarkable felicity and facility of expression, all she told charmed. Her letters must have been received by her friends at home with rapture, as they have been read for more than a century since, by strangers, with unequalled admiration; for, in spite of the many journeys that have been since written and published, by persons of all ranks and of all degrees of information, a letter of Lady Mary's is hailed with as much pleasure now as at the moment when the public were so fortunate as first to become introduced to this fascinating woman, by means of her writings.

Her power of acquiring languages was remarkable: the French and Italian tongues were already familiar to her, and she mastered the German during her travels, and studied the Turkish while resident at Constantinople.

When the heats of summer drove the English residents from the city, it was customary for those who composed the embassy to retire to the shores of the Bosphorus, or the village of Belgrade, about fourteen miles distant. The country here is delightful, and here Lady Mary fixed her temporary abode. This was an important era in her life; for in this retreat she made an experiment which has since been the means of saving thousands of lives throughout Europe. Although a custom common in the East, it was never attempted beyond that boundary, to adopt the method, always found successful, of inoculation for the small-pox. She had the courage to try its efficacy on her own son,—then a child of three years of age,—and its perfect success encouraged her to persevere in recommending it to her countrymen. Happily she succeeded in inducing them to receive the remedy which so greatly ameliorated the ravages of the most frightful of diseases, which for ages had carried off its victims. She writes thus to Mr. Wortley, who did not oppose her in her resolution:—

"Belgrade, March 23, 1718.

"The boy was *engrafted* last Tuesday, and is at this time singing and playing, very impatient for his supper. I pray God my next may give as good account of him. I cannot engraft the girl; her nurse has not had the small-pox."

The first time that Lady Mary names this important subject, so fraught with safety to the world, is in a letter from Adrianople to a friend :—

TO MRS. S. C.

"Adrianople, April 1, O. S.

"In my opinion, dear S., I ought rather to quarrel with you for not answering my Nimeguen letter of August till December, than to excuse my not writing again till now. I am sure there is on my side a very good excuse for silence, having gone such tiresome land-journeys, though I don't find the conclusion of them so bad as you seem to imagine. I am very easy here, and not in the solitude you fancy me. The great number of Greeks, French, English, and Italians, that are under our protection, make their court to me from morning till night; and, I'll assure you, many of them are very fine ladies; for there is no possibility for a Christian to live easily under this government but by the protection of an embassador—and the richer they are, the greater is their danger.

"Those dreadful stories you have heard of the *plague* have very little foundation in truth. I own I have much ado to reconcile myself to the sound of a word which has always given me such terrible ideas, though I am convinced there is little more in it than in a fever. As a proof of this, let me tell you that we passed through two or three towns most violently infected. In the very next house where we lay (in one of those places) two persons died of it. Luckily for me, I was so well deceived that I knew nothing of the matter; and I was made believe, that our second cook had only a great cold. However, we left our doctor to take care of him, and yesterday they both arrived here in good health; and I am now let into the secret that he has had the *plague*. There are many that escape it; neither is the air ever infected. I am persuaded that it would be as easy a matter to root it out here as out of Italy and France; but it does so little mischief, they are not very solicitious about it, and are content to suffer this distemper instead of our variety, which they are utterly unacquainted with.

"*A propos* of distempers, I am going to tell you a thing that will make you wish yourself here. The small-pox, so fatal, and so general amongst us, is here entirely harmless by the invention of *ingrafting*, which is the term they give it. There is a set of old women who make it their business to perform the operation every autumn, in the month of September, when the great heat is abated. People send to one another to know if any of their family has a mind to have the small-pox: they make parties for this purpose, and when they are met (commonly fifteen or sixteen together), the old woman comes with a nut-shell full of the matter of the best sort of small-pox, and asks what vein you please to have opened. She immediately rips open that you offer to her with a large needle (which gives you no more pain than a common scratch), and puts into the vein as much matter as can lye upon the head of her needle, and after that binds up the little wound with a hollow bit of shell; and in this manner opens four or five veins. The Grecians have commonly the superstition of opening one in the middle of the forehead, one in each arm, and one on the breast, to mark the sign of the cross; but this has a very ill effect, all these wounds leaving little scars, and is not done by those that are not superstitious, who choose to have them in the legs, or that part of the arm that is concealed. The children or young patients play together all the rest of the day, and are in perfect health to the eighth. Then the fever begins to seize them, and they keep their beds two days, very seldom three. They have very rarely above twenty or thirty in their faces, which never mark; and in eight days' time they are as well as before their illness. Where they are wounded, there remain running sores during the distemper, which I don't doubt is a great relief to it. Every year thousands undergo this operation; and the French embassador says pleasantly, that they take the small-pox here by way of diversion, as they take the waters in other countries. There is no example of any one that has died in it; and you may believe I am well satisfied of the safety of this experiment, since I intend to try it on my dear little son.

"I am patriot enough to take pains to bring this useful invention into fashion in England; and I should not fail to write to some of our doctors very particularly about it, if I knew any one of them that I thought had virtue enough to destroy such a considerable branch of their revenue for the good of mankind. But that distemper is too beneficial to them not to expose to all their resentment the hardy wight that should undertake to put an end to it. Perhaps, if I live to return, I may, however, have courage to war with them. Upon this occasion admire the heroism in the heart of your friend, &c. &c."

During her absence from England, Lady Mary corresponded with her admiring friend, Pope, whose tender letters can leave no room to doubt that he felt something more than friendship for the too charming traveller, whose road he wishes "may be all roses and myrtles; and that a thousand objects may rise around her, agreeable enough to make England less desirable to her:" and professes that, in his mind, if he was her companion, "every reasonable entertainment and beautiful view would be doubly instructive when she talked of it."

His letters are sometimes mournfully expressive, and he seems in vain to endeavour to conceal his real feelings: thus he writes:—

"Madam,

"I no more think I can have too many of your letters, than that I could have too many writings to entitle me to the greatest estate in the world; which I think so valuable a friendship as yours is equal to. I am angry at every scrap of paper lost, as at something that interrupts the history of my title; and though it is but an odd compliment to compare a fine lady to Sibyl, your leaves, methinks, like hers, are too good to be committed to the winds; though I have no other way of receiving them but by those unfaithful messengers. I have had but three, and I reckon in that short one from Dort, which was rather a dying ejaculation than a letter. But I have so great an opinion of your goodness, that had I received none, I should not have accused you of neglect or insensibility. I am not so wrong-headed as to quarrel with my friends the minute they don't write; I'd as soon quarrel at the sun the minute he did not shine, which he is hindered from by accidental causes, and is in reality all that time performing the same course, and doing the same good offices as ever.

"You have contrived to say in your last, the two most pleasing things to me in nature; the first is, that whatever be the fate of your letters, you will continue to write in the discharge of your conscience. This is generous to the last degree, and a virtue you ought to enjoy. Be assured in return, my heart shall be as ready to think you have done every good thing, as yours can be to do it; so that you shall never be able to favour your absent friend, before he has thought himself obliged to you for the very favour you are then conferring.

"The other is, the justice you do me in taking what I writ to you in the serious manner it was meant: it is the point upon which I can bear no suspicion, and in which, above all, I desire to be thought serious: it would be the most vexatious of all tyranny, if you should pretend to take for raillery, what is the mere disguise of a discontented heart, that is unwilling to make you as melancholy as itself; and for wit, what is really only the natural overflowing and warmth of the same heart, as it is improved and awakened by an esteem for you: but, since you tell me you believe me, I fancy my expressions have not at least been entirely unfaithful to those thoughts, to which I am sure they can never be equal. May God increase your faith in all truths that are as great as this; and depend upon it, to whatever degree your belief may extend, you can never be a bigot.

"If you could see the heart I talk of, you would really think it a foolish good kind of thing, with some qualities as well deserving to be half laughed at, and half esteemed, as any in the world: its grand foible, in regard to you, is the most like reason of any foible in nature. Upon my faith, this heart is not, like a great warehouse, stored only with my own goods, with vast empty spaces to be supplied as fast as interest or ambition can fill them up; but it is every inch of it let out into lodgings for its friends, and shall never want a corner at your service; where I dare affirm, madam, your idea lies as warm and as close as any idea in Christendom."

Those letters written by Lady Mary to Pope are not in general her best: they have less ease and nature, and there is a greater display of her learning in them, than in those which she writes to her female friends. The following is, however, very interesting, and as curious as it is beautiful:—

TO MR. POPE.

"Adrianople, April 1, O.S. 1717.

"I dare say you expect at least something very new in this letter, after I have gone a journey not undertaken by any Christian for some hundred years. The most remarkable accident that happened to me, was my being very near overturned into the Hebrus; and, if I had much regard for the glories that one's name enjoys after death, I should certainly be sorry for having missed the romantic conclusion of swimming down the same river in which the musical head of Orpheus repeated verses so many ages since:—

> 'Caput a cervice revulsum,
> Gurgite cum medio portans Oeagrius Hebrus
> Volveret, Eurydicen vox ipsa, et frigida lingua,
> Ah! miseram Eurydicen! anima fugiente vocabat,
> Eurydicen toto referebant flumine ripæ.'

Who knows but some of your bright wits might have found it a subject affording many poetical turns, and have told the world, in an heroic elegy, that,

> As equal were our souls, so equal were our fates?

I despair of ever hearing so many fine things said of me, as so extraordinary a death would have given occasion for.

"I am at this present moment writing in a house situated on the banks of the Hebrus, which runs under my chamber window. My garden is all full of cypress trees, upon the branches of which several couple of true turtles are saying soft things to one another from morning till night. How naturally do *boughs* and *vows* come into my mind at this minute! and must not you confess, to my praise, that 'tis more than an ordinary discretion that can resist the wicked suggestions of poetry, in a place where truth, for once, furnishes all the ideas of pastoral? The summer is already far advanced in this part of the world; and, for some miles round Adrianople, the whole ground is laid out in gardens, and the banks of the rivers are set with rows of fruit-trees, under which all the most considerable Turks divert themselves every evening; not with walking, that is not one of their pleasures, but a set party of them choose out a green spot, where the shade is very thick, and there they spread a carpet, on which they sit drinking their coffee, and are generally attended by some slave with a fine voice, or that plays on some instrument. Every twenty paces you may see one of these little companies listening to the dashing of the river; and this taste is so universal, that the very gardeners are not without it. I have often seen them and their children sitting on the banks of the river, and playing on a rural instrument, perfectly answering the description of the ancient *fistula*, being composed of unequal reeds, with a simple but agreeable softness in the sound.

"Mr. Addison might here make the experiment he speaks of in his travels; there not being one instrument of music among the Greek or Roman statues, that is not to be found in the hands of the people of this country. The young lads generally divert themselves with making garlands for their favourite lambs, which I have often seen painted and adorned with flowers, lying at their feet while they sung or played. It is not that they ever read romances, but these are the ancient amusements here, and as natural to them as cudgel-playing and foot-ball to our British swains; the softness and warmth of the climate forbidding all rough exercises, which were never so much as heard of amongst them, and naturally inspiring a laziness and aversion to labour, which the great plenty indulges. These gardeners are the only happy race of country people in Turkey. They furnish all the city with fruits and herbs, and seem to live very easily. They are most of them Greeks, and have little houses in the midst of their gardens, where their wives and daughters take a liberty not permitted in the town, I mean, to go unveiled. These wenches are very neat and handsome, and pass their time at their looms under the shade of the trees.

"I no longer look upon Theocritus as a romantic writer; he has only given a plain image of the way of life amongst the peasants of his country; who, before oppression had reduced them to want, were, I suppose, all employed as the better sort of them are now. I don't doubt, had he been born a Briton, but his *Idylliums* had been filled with descriptions of threshing and churning, both which are unknown here, the corn being all trodden out by oxen; and butter (I speak it with sorrow) unheard of.

"I read over your Homer here with an infinite pleasure, and find several little passages explained, that I did not before entirely comprehend the beauty of; many of the customs, and much of the dress then in fashion, being yet retained. I don't wonder to find more remains here of an age so distant, than is to be found in any other country, the Turks not taking that pains to introduce their own manners as has been generally practised by other nations, that imagine themselves more polite. It would be too tedious to you to point out all the passages that relate to present customs. But I can assure you that the princesses and great ladies pass their time at their looms, embroidering veils and robes, surrounded by their maids, which are always very numerous, in the same manner as we find Andromache and Helen described. The description of the belt of Menelaus exactly resembles those that are now worn by the great men, fastened before with broad golden clasps, and embroidered round with rich work. The snowy veil that Helen throws over her face, is still fashionable; and I never see half a dozen of old bashaws (as I do very often), with their reverend beards, sitting basking in the sun, but I recollect good King Priam and his counsellors. Their manner of dancing is certainly the same that Diana is *sung* to have danced on the banks of Eurotas. The great lady still leads the dance, and is followed by a troop of young girls, who imitate her steps, and, if she sings, make up the chorus. The tunes are extremely gay and lively, yet with something in them wonderfully soft. The steps are varied according to the pleasure of her that leads the dance, but always in exact time, and infinitely more agreeable than any of our dances, at least in my opinion. I sometimes make one in the train, but am not skilful enough to lead; these are the Grecian dances, the Turkish being very different.

" I should have told you, in the first place, that the Eastern manners give a great light into many Scripture passages that appear odd to us, their phrases being commonly what we should call Scripture language. The vulgar Turk is very different from what is spoken at court, or amongst the people of figure, who always mix so much Arabic and Persian in their discourse, that it may very well be called another language. And 'tis as ridiculous to make use of the expressions commonly used, in speaking to a great man or lady, as it would be to speak broad Yorkshire or Somersetshire in the drawing-room. Besides this distinction, they have what they call the *sublime*, that is, a style proper for poetry, and which is the exact Scripture style. I believe you will be pleased to see a genuine example of this; and I am very glad I have it in my power to satisfy your curiosity, by sending you a faithful copy of the verses that Ibrahim Pashá, the reigning favourite, has made for the young princess, his contracted wife, whom he is not yet permitted to visit without witnesses, though she is gone home to his house. He is a man of wit and learning; and whether or no he is capable of writing good verse, you may be sure, that, on such an occasion, he would not want the assistance of the best poets in the empire. Thus the verses may be looked upon as a sample of their finest poetry; and I don't doubt you'll be of my mind, that it is most wonderfully resembling *The Song of Solomon*, which was also addressed to a royal bride.

'TURKISH VERSES ADDRESSED TO THE SULTANA, ELDEST DAUGHTER OF SULTAN ACHMET III.

STANZA I.

VER. 1. 'The nightingale now wanders in the vines:
Her passion is to seek roses.

2. I went down to admire the beauty of the vines:
The sweetness of your charms has ravish'd my soul.

VER. 3. Your eyes are black and lovely,
But wild and disdainful as those of a stag.*

STANZA II.

1. 'The wish'd possession is delay'd from day to day;
The cruel Sultan Achmet will not permit me
To see those cheeks, more vermilion than roses.

2. I dare not snatch one of your kisses;
The sweetness of your charms has ravish'd my soul.

3. Your eyes are black and lovely,
But wild and disdainful as those of a stag.

STANZA III.

1. 'The wretched Ibrahim sighs in these verses:
One dart from your eyes has pierc'd thro' my heart.

2. Ah! when will the hour of possession arrive?
Must I yet wait a long time?
The sweetness of your charms has ravish'd my soul.

3. Ah! Sultana! stag-ey'd—an angel amongst angels!
I desire,—and, my desire remains unsatisfied.—
Can you take delight to prey upon my heart?

STANZA IV.

1. 'My cries pierce the heavens!
My eyes are without sleep!
Turn to me, Sultana—let me gaze on thy beauty.

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* Sir W. Jones, in the preface to his Persian Grammar, objects to this translation. The expression is merely analogous to the "Βοῶπις" of Homer.

VER. 2. Adieu! —— I go down to the grave.
If you call me —— I return.
My heart is — hot as sulphur;—sigh, and it will flame.

3. Crown of my life! fair light of my eyes!
My Sultana! my princess!
I rub my face against the earth; — I am drown'd in scalding tears—I rave!
Have you no compassion? Will you not turn to look upon me?'

"I have taken abundance of pains to get these verses in a literal translation; and if you were acquainted with my interpreters, I might spare myself the trouble of assuring you, that they have received no poetical touches from their hands. In my opinion (allowing for the inevitable faults of a prose translation into a language so very different) there is a good deal of beauty in them. The epithet of *stag-ey'd* (though the sound is not very agreeable in English) pleases me extremely; and I think it a very lively image of the fire and indifference in his mistress's eyes. Monsieur Boileau has very justly observed, that we are never to judge of the elevation of an expression in an ancient author by the sound it carries with us; since it may be extremely fine with them, when, at the same time, it appears low or uncouth to us. You are so well acquainted with Homer, you cannot but have observed the same thing, and you must have the same indulgence for all Oriental poetry.

" The repetitions at the end of the two first stanzas are meant for a sort of chorus, and are agreeable to the ancient manner of writing. The music of the verses apparently changes in the third stanza, where the burthen is altered; and I think he very artfully seems more passionate at the conclusion, as 'tis natural for people to warn themselves by their own discourse, especially on a subject in which one is deeply concerned: 'tis certainly far more touching than our modern custom of concluding a song of passion with a turn which is inconsistent with it. The first verse is a description of the season of the year; all the country now being full of nightingales, whose amours with roses is an Arabian fable, as well known here as any part of Ovid amongst us, and is much the same as if an English poem should begin by saying—'*Now Philomela sings.*' Or what if I turned the whole into the style of English poetry, to see how it would look?

STANZA I.

' Now Philomel renews her tender strain,
Indulging all the night her pleasing pain:

I sought the groves to hear the wanton sing,
There saw a face more beauteous than the spring.

Your large stag-eyes, where thousand glories play,
As bright, as lively, but as wild as they.

STANZA II.

'In vain I'm promis'd such a heav'nly prize;
Ah! cruel Sultan! who delay'st my joys!

While piercing charms transfix my am'rous heart,
I dare not snatch one kiss to ease the smart.

Those eyes! like, &c.

STANZA III.

'Your wretched lover in these lines complains;
From those dear beauties rise his killing pains.

When will the hour of wish'd-for bliss arrive?
Must I wait longer?—Can I wait and live?

Ah! bright Sultana! maid divinely fair!
Can you, unpitying, see the pains I bear?

STANZA IV.

'The heavens relenting, hear my piercing cries,
I loathe the light, and sleep forsakes my eyes;
Turn thee, Sultana, ere thy lover dies:

Sinking to earth, I sigh the last adieu;
Call me, my goddess, and my life renew.

My queen! my angel! my fond heart's desire!
I rave—my bosom burns with heav'nly fire!
Pity that passion which thy charms inspire.'

"I have taken the liberty, in the second verse, of following what I suppose the true sense of the author, though not literally expressed. By his saying, *He went down to admire the beauty of the vines, and her charms ravished his soul,* I understand a poetical fiction, of having first seen her in a garden, where he was admiring the beauty of the spring. But I could not forbear retaining the comparison of her eyes with those of a stag, though, perhaps, the novelty of it may give it a burlesque sound in our language. I cannot determine upon the whole how well I have succeeded in the translation, neither do I think our English proper to express such violence of passion, which is very seldom felt amongst us. We want also those compound words which are very frequent and strong in the Turkish language.

"You see I am pretty far gone in Oriental learning; and, to say truth, I study very hard. I wish my studies may give me an occasion of entertaining your curiosity, which will be the utmost advantage hoped for from them by,

"Yours, &c."

The letters, that must necessarily interest the reader of Lady Mary's works, relate her history in the most agreeable manner; for her own words are most suitable to recount her own adventures: the following, amongst many of great interest, addressed to her sister, the Countess of Mar, gives a lively picture of her adventure with the "lovely Fatima," wife of the deputy of the Grand-Vizier.

TO THE COUNTESS OF MAR.

"Adrianople, April 18, O. S. 1717.

"I wrote to you, dear sister, and to all my other English correspondents, by the last ship, and only Heaven can tell when I shall have another opportunity of sending to you; but I cannot forbear to write again, though perhaps my letter may lie upon my hands these two months. To confess the truth, my head is so full of my entertainment yesterday, that 'tis absolutely necessary for my own repose to give it some vent. Without farther preface, I will then begin my story.

I was invited to dine with the Grand-Vizier's lady,* and it was with a great deal of pleasure I prepared myself for an entertainment which was never before given to any Christian. I thought I should very little satisfy her curiosity (which I did not doubt was a considerable motive to the invitation) by going in a dress she was used to see, and therefore dressed myself in the court habit of

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* This was the Sultana Hafitén, the favourite and widow of the Sultan Mustapha II., who died in 1703.

Vienna, which is much more magnificent than ours. However, I chose to go *incognito*, to avoid any disputes about ceremony, and went in a Turkish coach, only attended by my woman that held up my train, and the Greek lady who was my interpretess. I was met at the court door by her black eunuch, who helped me out of the coach with great respect, and conducted me through several rooms, where her she-slaves, finely dressed, were ranged on each side. In the innermost I found the lady sitting on her sofa, in a sable vest. She advanced to meet me, and presented me half a dozen of her friends with great civility. She seemed a very good-looking woman, near fifty years old. I was surprised to observe so little magnificence in her house, the furniture being all very moderate; and, except the habits and number of her slaves, nothing about her appeared expensive. She guessed at my thoughts, and told me she was no longer of an age to spend either her time or money in superfluities; that her whole expence was in charity, and her whole employment praying to God. There was no affectation in this speech; both she and her husband are entirely given up to devotion. He never looks upon any other woman; and, what is much more extraordinary, touches no bribes, notwithstanding the example of all his predecessors. He is so scrupulous on this point, he would not accept Mr. Wortley's present, till he had been assured over and over that it was a settled perquisite of his place at the entrance of every embassador.

"She entertained me with all kinds of civility till dinner came in, which was served, one dish at a time, to a vast number, all finely dressed after their manner, which I don't think so bad as you have perhaps heard it represented. I am a very good judge of their eating, having lived three weeks in the house of an *effendi* at Belgrade, who gave us very magnificent dinners, dressed by his own cooks. The first week they pleased me extremely; but I own I then began to grow weary of their table, and desired our own cook might add a dish or two after our manner. But I attribute this to custom, and am very much inclined to believe that an Indian, who had never tasted of either, would prefer their cookery to ours. Their sauces are very high, all the roast very much done. They use a great deal of very rich spice. The soup is served for the last dish; and they have at least as great a variety of ragouts as we have. I was very sorry I could not eat of as many as the good lady would have had me, who was very earnest in serving me of every thing. The treat concluded with coffee and perfumes, which is a high mark of respect; two slaves kneeling *censed* my hair, clothes, and handkerchief. After this ceremony, she commanded her slaves to play and dance, which they did with their guitars in their hands; and she excused to me their want of skill, saying she took no care to accomplish them in that art.

"I returned her thanks, and soon after took my leave. I was conducted back in the same manner I entered; and would have gone straight to my own house; but the Greek lady with me earnestly solicited me to visit the *kiyàya's** lady, saying, he was the second officer in the empire, and ought indeed to be looked upon as the first, the Grand-Vizier having only the name, while he exercised the authority. I had found so little diversion in the Vizier's *harém*,† that I had no mind to go into another. But her importunity prevailed with me, and I am extremely glad I was so complaisant.

"All things here were with quite another air than at the Grand-Vizier's; and the very house confessed the difference between an old devotee and a young beauty. It was nicely clean and magnificent. I was met at the door by two black eunuchs, who led me though a long gallery between two ranks of beautiful young girls, with their hair finely plaited, almost hanging to their feet, all dressed in fine light damasks, brocaded with silver, I was sorry that decency did not permit me to stop to consider them nearer. But that thought was lost upon my entrance into a large room, or rather pavilion, built round with gilded sashes, which were most of them thrown up, and the trees planted near them gave an agreeable shade, which hindered the sun from being troublesome. The jessamines and honeysuckles that twisted round their trunks, shed a soft perfume, increased by a white marble fountain playing sweet water in the lower part of the room, which fell into three or four basins with a pleasing sound. The roof was painted with all sorts of flowers, falling out of gilded baskets, that seemed tumbling down. On a sofa, raised three steps, and covered with fine Persian carpets, sat the *kiyàya's* lady, leaning on cushions of white satin, embroidered; and at her feet sat two young girls about twelve years old, lovely as angels, dressed perfectly rich, and almost covered with jewels. But they were hardly seen near the fair *Fatima* (for that is her name), so much her beauty effaced every thing I have seen, nay, all that has been called lovely either in England or Germany. I must own that I never saw any thing so gloriously beautiful, nor can I recollect a face that would have been taken notice of near hers. She stood up to receive me, saluting me after their fashion, putting her hand to her heart with a sweetness full of majesty, that no court breeding could ever give. She ordered cushions to be given me, and took care to place me in the corner, which is the place of honour. I confess, though the Greek lady had before given me a great opinion of her beauty, I was so struck with admiration, that I could not for some time speak to her, being wholly taken up in gazing. That surprising harmony of features! that charming result of the whole! that exact proportion of body! that lovely bloom of complexion unsullied by art! the unutterable enchantment of her smile!——But her eyes! ——large and black, with all the soft languishment of the blue! every turn of her face discovering some new grace.

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* Kyha á, lieutenant. The deputy to the Grand-Vizier.

† Harém, literally "The Forbidden," the apartment sacredly appropriate to females, into which every man in Turkey, but the master of the house, is interdicted from entering.

"After my first surprise was over, I endeavoured, by nicely examining her face, to find out some imperfection, without any fruit of my search, but my being clearly convinced of the error of that vulgar notion, that a face exactly proportioned, and perfectly beautiful, would not be agreeable; nature having done for her with more success, what Apelles is said to have essayed, by a collection of the most exact features, to form a perfect face. Add to all this, a behaviour so full of grace and sweetness, such easy motions, with an air so majestic, yet free from stiffness or affectation, that I am persuaded, could she be suddenly transported upon the most polite throne of Europe, nobody would think her other than born and bred to be a queen, though educated in a country we call barbarous. To say all in a word, our most celebrated English beauties would vanish near her.

"She was dressed in a *caftán* of gold brocade, flowered with silver, very well fitted to her shape, and shewing to admiration the beauty of her bosom, only shaded by the thin gauze of her shift. Her drawers were pale pink, her waistcoat green and silver, her slippers white satin, finely embroidered: her lovely arms adorned with bracelets of diamonds, and her broad girdle set round with diamonds; upon her head a rich Turkish handherchief of pink and silver, her own fine black hair hanging a great length in various tresses, and on one side of her head some bodkins of jewels. I am afraid you will accuse me of extravagance in this description. I think I have read somewhere that women always speak in rapture when they speak of beauty, and I cannot imagine why they should not be allowed to do so. I rather think it a virtue to be able to admire without any mixture of desire or envy. The gravest writers have spoken with great warmth of some celebrated pictures and statues. The workmanship of Heaven certainly excels all our weak imitations, and, I think, has a much better claim to our praise. For my part, I am not ashamed to own I took more pleasure in looking on the beauteous Fatima, than the finest piece of sculpture could have given me.

"She told me the two girls at her feet were her daughters, though she appeared too young to be their mother. Her fair maids were ranged below the sofa, to the number of twenty, and put me in mind of the pictures of the ancient nymphs. I did not think all nature could have furnished such a scene of beauty. She made them a sign to play and dance. Four of them immediately began to play some soft airs on instruments between a lute and a guitar, which they accompanied with their voices, while the others danced by turns. This dance was very different from what I had seen before. * * * I can assure you that the music is extremely pathetic; 'tis true I am inclined to prefer the Italian, but perhaps I am partial. I am acquainted with a Greek lady who sings better than Mrs. Robinson, and is very well skilled in both, who gives the preference to the Turkish. 'Tis certain they have very fine natural voices; these were very agreeable. When the dance was over, four fair slaves came into the room with silver censers in their hands, and perfumed the air with amber, aloes-wood, and other scents. After this they served me coffee upon their knees in the finest japan china, with *soucoupes* of silver, gilt. The lovely Fatima entertained me all this while in the most polite agreeable manner, calling me often *Guzĕl sultanum*, or the beautiful sultana, and desiring my friendship with the best grace in the world, lamenting that she could not entertain me in my own language.

"When I took my leave, two maids brought in a fine silver basket of embroidered handkerchiefs; she begged I would wear the richest for her sake, and gave the others to my woman and interpretess. I retired through the same ceremonies as before, and could not help thinking I had been some time in Mahomet's paradise, so much was I charmed with what I had seen. I know not how the relation of it appears to you. I wish it may give you part of my pleasure; for I would have my dear sister share in all the diversions of,

"Yours, &c."

In May, 1717, Lady Mary thus writes to a correspondent, giving an account of her impressions of Constantinople, and her journey thither:—

TO THE ABBOT ———.

" Constantinople, May 29, O.S. 1717.

" I have had the advantage of very fine weather all my journey; and, as the summer is now in its beauty, I enjoyed the pleasure of fine prospects; and the meadows being full of all sorts of garden flowers and sweet herbs, my berlin perfumed the air as it pressed them. The Grand-Signior furnished us with thirty covered waggons for our baggage, and five coaches of the country for my women. We found the road full of the great spahis and their equipages coming out of Asia to the war. They always travel with tents; but I chose to lie in houses all the way.

"I will not trouble you with the names of the villages we passed, in which there was nothing remarkable, but at Tchiorlú, where there was a *conac*, or little seraglio, built for the use of the Grand-Signior when he goes this road. I had the curiosity to view all the apartments destined for the ladies of his court. They were in the midst of a thick grove of trees, made fresh by fountains; but I was most surprised to see the walls almost covered with little distiches of Turkish verse, wrote with pencils. I made my interpreter explain them to me, and I found several of them very well turned; though I easily believed him, that they had lost much of their beauty in the translation. One was literally thus in English:—

'We come into this world; we lodge, and we depart;
He never goes, that's lodged within my heart.'

"The rest of our journey was through fine painted meadows, by the side of the sea of Marmora, the ancient Propontis. We lay the next night at Selivrea, anciently a noble town. It is now a good sea-port, and neatly built enough, and has a bridge of thirty-two arches. Here is a famous Greek church. I had given one of my coaches to a Greek lady, who desired the conveniency of travelling with me; she designed to pay her devotions, and I was glad of the opportunity of going with her. I found it an ill-built edifice, set out with the same sort of ornaments, but less rich, as the Roman-catholic churches. They shewed me a saint's body, where I threw a piece of money; and a picture of the Virgin Mary, drawn by the hand of St. Luke, very little to the credit of his painting; but, however, the finest Madona of Italy is not more famous for her miracles. The Greeks have a monstrous taste in their pictures, which, for more finery, are always drawn upon a gold ground. You may imagine what a good air this has; but they have no notion either of shade or proportion. They have a bishop here, who officiated in his purple robe, and sent me a candle almost as big as myself for a present, when I was at my lodging.

“We lay that night at a town called Bujuk Checkmedji, or Great Bridge; and the night following, at Kujuk Checkmedji', or Little Bridge; in a very pleasant lodging, formerly a monastery of dervises, having before it a large court, encompassed with marble cloisters, with a good fountain in the middle. The prospect from this place, and the gardens round it, is the most agreeable I have seen; and shews that monks of all religions know how to choose their retirements. 'Tis now belonging to a *hogia* or schoolmaster, who teaches boys here. I asked him to shew me his own apartment, and was surprised to see him point to a tall cypress-tree in the garden, on the top of which was a place for a bed for himself, and a little lower, one for his wife and two children, who slept there every night. I was so much diverted with the fancy, I resolved to examine his nest nearer; but after going up fifty steps, I found I had still fifty to go up, and then I must climb from branch to branch, with some hazard of my neck. I thought it therefore the best way to come down again.

"We arrived the next day at Constantinople; but I can yet tell you very little of it, all my time having been taken up with receiving visits, which are, at least, a very good entertainment to the eyes, the young women being all beauties, and their beauty highly improved by the high taste of their dress. Our palace is in Pera, which is no more a suburb of Constantinople than Westminster is a suburb to London. All the embassadors are lodged very near each other. One part of our house shews us the port, the city, and the seraglio, and the distant hills of Asia; perhaps, all together, the most beautiful prospect in the world.

"A certain French author says, Constantinople is twice as big as Paris. Mr. Wortley is unwilling to own it is bigger than London, though I confess it appears to me to be so; but I don't believe it is so populous. The burying-fields about it are certainly much larger than the whole city. It is surprising what a vast deal of land is lost this way in Turkey. Sometimes I have seen burying-places of several miles, belonging to very inconsiderable villages, which were formerly great towns, and retain no other mark of their ancient grandeur than this dismal one. On no occasion do they ever remove a stone that serves for a monument. Some of them are costly enough, being of very fine marble. They set up a pillar, with a carved turbant on the top of it, to the memory of a man; and as the turbants, by their different shapes, shew the quality or profession, 'tis in a manner putting up the arms of the deceased; besides, the pillar commonly bears an inscription in gold letters. The ladies have a simple pillar, without other ornament, except those that die unmarried, who have a rose on the top of their monument. The sepulchres of particular families are railed in, and planted round with trees. Those of the sultans, and some great men, have lamps constantly burning in them.

"When I spoke of their religion, I forgot to mention two particularities, one of which I have read of, but it seemed so odd to me, I could not believe it; yet 'tis certainly true: that, when a man has divorced his wife in the most solemn manner, he can take her again upon no other terms than permitting another man to pass a night with her; and there are some examples of those who have submitted to this law, rather than not have back their beloved. The other point of doctrine is very extraordinary. Any woman that dies unmarried is looked upon to die in a state of reprobation. To confirm this belief, they reason, that the end of the creation of woman is to increase and multiply; and that she is only properly employed in the works of her calling when she is bringing forth children, or taking care of them, which are all the virtues that God expects from her. And, indeed, their way of life, which shuts them out of all public commerce, does not permit them any other. Our vulgar notion, that they don't own women to have any souls, is a mistake. 'Tis true, they say they are not of so elevated a kind, and therefore must not hope to be admitted into the paradise appointed for the men, who are to be entertained by celestial beauties. But there is a place of happiness destined for souls of the inferior order, where all good women are to be in eternal bliss. Many of them are very superstitious, and will not remain widows ten days, for fear of dying in the reprobate state of an useless creature. But those that like their liberty, and are not slaves to their religion, content themselves with marrying when they are afraid of dying. This is a piece of theology very different from that which teaches nothing to be more acceptable to God than a vow of perpetual virginity: which divinity is most rational, I leave you to determine.

"I have already made some progress in a collection of Greek medals. Here are several professed antiquaries who are ready to serve any body that desires them. But you cannot imagine how they stare in my face when I enquire about them, as if nobody was permitted to seek after medals till they were grown a piece of antiquity themselves. I have got some very valuable ones of the Macedonian kings, particularly one of Perseus, so lively, I fancy I can see all his ill qualities in his face. I have a porphyry head finely cut, of the true Greek sculpture; but who it represents, is to be guessed at by the learned when I return. For you are not to suppose these antiquaries (who are all Greeks) know any thing. Their trade is only to sell; they have correspondents at Aleppo, Grand Cairo, in Arabia, and Palestine, who send them all they can find, and very often great heaps that are only fit to melt into pans and kettles. They get the best price they can for them, without knowing those that are valuable from those that are not. Those that pretend to skill, generally find out the image of some saint in the medals of the Greek cities. One of them shewing me the figure of a Pallas, with a victory in her hand on a reverse, assured me it was the Virgin holding a crucifix. The same man offered me the head of a Socrates on a sardonyx; and, to enhance the value, gave him the title of Saint Augustine.

"I have bespoken a mummy, which I hope will come safe to my hands, notwithstanding the misfortune that befel a very fine one designed for the King of Sweden. He gave a great price for it, and the Turks took it into their heads that he must have some considerable project depending upon it. They fancied it the body of God knows who; and that the state of their empire mystically depended on the conservation of it. Some old prophecies were remembered upon this occasion, and the mummy was committed prisoner to the Seven Towers, where it has remained under close confinement ever since: I dare not try my interest in so considerable a point as the release of it; but I hope mine will pass without examination.

"I can tell you nothing more at present of this famous city. When I have looked a little about me, you shall hear from me again.

"I am, Sir, yours, &c. &c."

Her residence at Belgrade Lady Mary describes in a letter to Pope, as a lively picture of the Elysian fields. Her abode she describes as in the midst of a wood, consisting chiefly of fruit trees, watered by a vast number of fountains, famous for the excellency of their water, and divided into many shady walks, upon short grass, "that seems to me artificial, but I am assured is the pure work of nature," and within reach of the refreshing breezes from the Black Sea. Every night the inhabitants, who were the richest among the Christians, assembled at a fountain to dance and sing: the young females exactly answering to the accounts of poets and the representations of painters. But, of all this Arcadian beauty, Lady Mary, whose passion for nature and solitude was somewhat capricious, and who generally preferred more stirring scenes, where she could exercise her spirit of observation, and at the same time shine herself, began evidently to weary; for she acknowledges to wishing, at times, to exchange these scenes for "the smoke and impertinences" of London.

"I endeavour," she says, "to persuade myself that I live in a more agreeable variety than you do; and that—Monday, setting of partridges; Tuesday, reading English; Wednesday, studying the Turkish language (in which, by the way, I am already very learned); Thursday, classical authors;

Friday, spent in writing; Saturday, at my needle; and Sunday, admitting of visits, and hearing of music, is a better way of disposing of the week, than—Monday, at the drawing room; Tuesday, Lady Mohun's; Wednesday, at the opera; Thursday, the play; Friday, Mrs. Chetwynd's; a perpetual round of hearing the same scandal, and seeing the same follies acted over and over, which here affect me no more than they do *other* dead people."

In 1717 Mr. Wortley was recalled from his post, and the report of his probable return, bringing with him his charming wife, inspired Pope with the following lively letter:—

"Madam,

"I could quarrel with you quite through this paper, upon a period in yours, which bids me remember you if possibly I can. You would have shewn more knowledge both of yourself and of me, had you bid me forget you if possibly I could. When I do, may this hand (as the Scripture says) forget its cunning, and this heart its—folly, I was going to say—but I mean, its reason, and the most rational sensation it ever had—that of your merit.

"The poetical manner in which you paint some of the scenes about you, makes me despise my native country, and sets me on fire to fall into the dance about your fountain in Belgrade village. I fancy myself, in my romantic thoughts and distant admiration of you, not unlike the man in the Alchemist, that has a passion for the queen of the fairies; I lie dreaming of you in moon-shiny nights, exactly in the posture of Endymion gaping for Cynthia in a picture; and with just such a surprise and rapture should I awake, if, after your long revolutions were accomplished, you should at last come rolling back again, smiling with all that gentleness and serenity peculiar to the moon and you, and gilding the same mountains from which you first set out on your solemn melancholy journey. I am told that fortune (more just to us than your virtue) will restore the most precious thing it ever robbed us of. Some think it will be the only equivalent the world affords for Pitt's diamond, so lately sent out of our country; which, after you were gone, was accounted the most valuable thing here. Adieu to that toy! let the costly bauble be hung about the neck of the baby king it belongs to, so England does but recover that jewel which was the wish of all her sensible hearts, and the joy of all her discerning eyes. I can keep no measures in speaking of this subject. I see you already coming; I feel you as you draw nearer; my heart leaps at your arrival. Let us have you from the East, and the sun is at her service.

"I write as if I were drunk; the pleasure I take in thinking of your return transports me beyond the bounds of common sense and decency. Yet believe me, madam, if there be any circumstance of chagrin in the occasion of that return, if there be any public or private ill fortune that may give you a displeasure, I must still be ready to feel a part of it, notwithstanding the joy I now express.

"I have been mad enough to make all the enquiry I could at what time you set out, and what route you were to take. If Italy run yet in your thoughts, I hope you'll see it in your return. If I but knew you intended it, I'd meet you there, and travel back with you. I would fain behold the best and brightest thing I know, in the scene of ancient virtue and glory: I would fain see how you look on the very spot where Curtius sacrificed himself for his country; and observe what difference there would be in your eyes when you ogled the statue of Julius Cæsar, and Marcus Aurelius. Allow me but to sneak after you in your train, to fill my pockets with coins, or to lug an old busto behind you, and I shall be proud beyond expression. Let people think, if they will, that I did all this for the pleasure of treading on classic ground; I would whisper other reasons in your ear. The joy of following your footsteps would as soon carry me to Mecca as to Rome; and let me tell you as a friend, if you are really disposed to embrace the Mahometan religion, I'll fly on pilgrimage with you thither, with as good a heart and as sound devotion as ever

Jeffery Rudel, the Provençal poet, went after the fine Countess of Tripoly to Jerusalem. If you never heard of this Jeffery, I'll assure you he deserves your acquaintance. He lived in our Richard the First's time; put on a pilgrim's weed, took his voyage, and, when he got ashore, was just upon the point of expiring. The Countess of Tripoly came to the ship, took him by the hand; he lifted up his eyes, said he had been blest with a sight of her, he was satisfied, and so departed this life. What did the Countess of Tripoly upon this? She made him a splendid funeral; built him a tomb of porphyry; put his epitaph upon it in Arabic verse; had his sonnets curiously copied out, and illumined with letters of gold; was taken with melancholy, and turned nun. All this, madam, you may depend upon for a truth, and I send it to you in the very words of my author.

"I don't expect all this should be punctually copied on either side, but methinks something like it is done already. The letters of gold, and the curious illumining of the sonnets, was not a greater token of respect than what I have paid to your eclogues: they lie inclosed in a monument of red Turkey, written in my fairest hand; the gilded leaves are opened with no less veneration than the pages of the sibyls; like them, locked up and concealed from all prophane eyes; none but my own have beheld these sacred remains of yourself, and I should think it as great a wickedness to divulge them as to scatter abroad the ashes of my ancestors. As for the rest, if I have not followed you to the ends of the earth, 'tis not my fault; if I had, I might possibly have died as gloriously as Jeffery Rudel; and if I had so died, you might probably have done every thing for me that the Countess of Tripoly did, except turning nun.

"But since our romance is like to have a more fortunate conclusion, I desire you to take another course to express your favour towards me; I mean, by bringing over the fair Circassian we used to talk of. I was serious in that request, and will prove it by paying for her, if you will lay out my money so well for me. The thing shall be as secret as you please, and the lady made another half of me, that is, both my mistress and my servant, as I am both my own servant and my own master. But I beg you to look oftener than you use to do in your glass, in order to choose me one I may like. If you have any regard to my happiness, let there be something as near as possible to that face; but, if you please, the colours a little less vivid, the eyes a little less bright (such as reflection will shew 'em); in short, let her be such an one as you seem in your own eyes, that is, a good deal less amiable than you are. Take care of this, if you have any regard to my quiet; for otherwise, instead of being her master, I must be only her slave.

"I cannot end this letter without asking if you have received a box of books, together with letters, from Mr. Congreve and myself? It was directed to Mr. Wortley at Constantinople, by a merchant-ship that set sail last June. Mr. Congreve, in fits of the gout, remembers you. Dr. Garth makes epigrams in prose when he speaks of you. Sir Robert Rich's lady loves you, though Sir Robert admires you. Mr. Craggs commemorates you with honour; the Duke of Buckingham with praise; I myself with something more. When people speak most highly of you, I think them sparing; when I try myself to speak of you, I think I am cold and stupid. I think my letters have nothing in 'em, but I am sure my heart has so much, that I am vexed to find no better name for your friend and admirer, than

"Your friend and admirer,
A. POPE."

What Pope asks in jest, namely, a Circassian slave, Lady Mary's friend, Lady Rich, actually requests in earnest. She tells her that she could not forbear laughing heartily at the simplicity of such a request; and, after explaining that the Greeks are "subjects, not slaves," and, in spite of the erroneous notions entertained in England on such matters, that it would be impossible to procure the commonest slave who was good for anything, and, in fact, was not a dangerous character, goes on to assure her of the falsehoods continually uttered by travellers on the subject of the East, of which they are singularly ignorant.

. . . .

"As to the balm of Mecca," she continues, "I will certainly send you some; but it is not so easily got as you suppose it, and I cannot, in conscience, advise you to make use of it. I know not how it comes to have such universal applause. All the ladies of my acquaintance at London and Vienna have begged me to send pots of it to them. I have had a present of a small quantity (which, I'll assure you, is very valuable) of the best sort, and with great joy applied it to my face, expecting some wonderful effect to my advantage. The next morning the change indeed was wonderful; my face was swelled to a very extraordinary size, and all over as red as my Lady H——'s. It remained in this lamentable state three days, during which you may be sure I passed my time very ill. I believed it would never be otherways; and, to add to my mortification, Mr. Wortley reproached my indiscretion without ceasing. However, my face is since *in statu quo;* nay, I am told by the ladies here, that it is much mended by the operation, which I confess I cannot ceive in my looking-glass. Indeed, if one were to form an opinion of this balm from their faces, one should think very well of it. They all make use of it, and have the loveliest bloom in the world. For my part, I never intend to endure the pain of it again; let my complexion take its natural course, and decay in its own due time. I have very little esteem for medicines of this nature; but do as you please, madam; only remember before you use it, that your face will not be such as you will care to shew in the drawing-room for some days after.

"If one was to believe the women in this country, there is a surer way of making one's self beloved than by becoming handsome; though you know that's our method. But they pretend to the knowledge of secrets that, by way of enchantment, give them the entire empire over whom they please. For me, who am not very apt to believe in wonders, I cannot find faith for this. I disputed the point last night with a lady, who really talks very sensibly on any other subject; but she was downright angry with me, in that she did not perceive she had persuaded me of the truth of forty stories she told me of this kind; and at last mentioned several ridiculous marriages, that there could be no other reason assigned for. I assured her, that in England, where we were entirely ignorant of all magic, where the climate is not half so warm, nor the women half so handsome, we were not without our ridiculous marriages; and that we did not look upon it as any thing supernatural when a man played the fool for the sake of a woman. But my arguments could not convince her against (as she said) her certain knowledge. To this she added, that she scrupled making use of *charms* herself; but that she could do it whenever she pleased; and, staring me in the face, said (with a very learned air), that no enchantments would have their effects upon me; and that there were some people exempt from their power, but very few. You may imagine how I laughed at this discourse; but all the women are of the same opinion. They don't pretend to any commerce with the devil; but only that there are certain compositions adapted to inspire love. If one could send over a shipload of them, I fancy it would be a very quick way of raising an estate. What would not some ladies of our acquaintance give for such merchandize?

"Adieu, my dear Lady Rich, I cannot conclude my letter with a subject that affords more delightful scenes to the imagination. I leave you to figure to yourself the extreme court that will be made to me, at my return, if my travels should furnish me with such a useful piece of learning.

"I am, dear madam, yours, &c. &c."

Lady Mary's daughter, afterwards Lady Bute, was born while she was at Pera, as she informs her sister, writing from thence, March 10, 1717, O. S. In the same letter she describes her visit to the widow, Sultana Hafitén, whose jewels she represents as so magnificent, that she imagines her account will scarcely be credited.

"Her dress was something so surprisingly rich, that I cannot forbear describing it to you. She wore a vest called *donalmá*, which differs from a *caftán* by longer sleeves, and folding over at the bottom. It was of purple cloth, strait to her shape, and thick set, on each side, down to her feet, and round the sleeves, with pearls of the best water, of the same size as their buttons commonly are. You must not suppose, that I mean as large as those of my Lord ——, but about the bigness of a pea; and to these buttons large loops of diamonds, in the form of those gold loops so common on birth-day coats. This habit was tied, at the waist, with two large tassels of smaller pearls, and round the arms embroidered with large diamonds. Her shift was fastened at the bottom with a great diamond, shaped like a lozenge; her girdle as broad as the broadest English ribband, entirely covered with diamonds. Round her neck she wore three chains, which reached to her knees:

one of large pearl, at the bottom of which hung a fine coloured emerald, as big as a turkey-egg; another, consisting of two hundred emeralds, closely joined together, of the most lively green, perfectly matched, every one as large as a half-crown piece, and as thick as three crown pieces; and another of small emeralds, perfectly round. But her ear-rings eclipsed all the rest. They were two diamonds, shaped exactly like pears, as large as a big hazle-nut. Round her *kalpác* she had four strings of pearl, the whitest and most perfect in the world, at least enough to make four necklaces, every one as large as the Duchess of Marlborough's, and of the same shape, fastened with two roses, consisting of a large ruby for the middle stone, and round them twenty drops of clean diamonds to each. Beside this, her head-dress was covered with bodkins of emeralds and diamonds. She wore large diamond bracelets, and had five rings on her fingers (except Mr. Pitt's) the largest I ever saw in my life. It is for jewellers to compute the value of these things; but, according to the common estimation of jewels in our part of the world, her whole dress must be worth a hundred thousand pounds sterling. This I am sure of, that no European queen has half the quantity; and the Empress's jewels, though very fine, would look very mean near hers."

The descriptions Lady Mary gives of all she saw are so graphic, that it is impossible not to follow them with all the interest of a fairy tale full of wonders; there is such a charm in her style, that to doubt one of her assertions never enters the mind; although, at the time she wrote, such accounts were novel enough to create suspicion that the gorgeous pictures she drew were too highly coloured for truth. Her account of the harém of the beautiful Fatima must have been read by her sister like an Eastern romance; but she warns her to remember that the Arabian tales themselves, which her letters resemble, "were written by an author of the country" where she was sojourning, "and, except the enchantments, are a real representation of the manners."

"We travellers," she adds, "are in very hard circumstances: if we say nothing but what has been said before us, *we are dull, and we have observed nothing*. If we tell anything new, we are laughed at as *fabulous and romantic*, not allowing either for the difference of ranks, which affords difference of company, or *mere curiosity*, or the change of customs, that happen every twenty years in every country."

Lady Mary, in this sentence, had said more to the purpose than all the critics on travellers since her time, although even ignorance now has left off doubting, and every thing new does not appear to "home keepers" so "passing strange" as it did formerly; nor is every traveller looked upon as a disciple of Sir John Mandeville or Mendez Pinto. Constantinople is now well-trodden ground; but who has told the secrets of the harém with so much grace as Lady Mary? or who has so well described the glorious city and its mosques?

"But what would you say if I told you, that I have been in a harém, where the winter apartment was wainscoted with inlaid work of mother-of-pearl, ivory of different colours, and olive wood, exactly like the little boxes you have seen brought out of this country; and in whose rooms designed for summer, the walls are all crusted with japan china, the roofs gilt, and the floors spread with the finest Persian carpets? Yet there is nothing more true; such is the palace of my lovely friend, the fair Fatima, whom I was acquainted with at Adrianople. I went to visit her yesterday; and, if possible, she appeared to me handsomer than before. She met me at the door of her chamber, and, giving me her hand with the best grace in the world—'You Christian ladies,' said she, with a smile that made her as beautiful as an angel, 'have the reputation of inconstancy, and I did not expect, whatever goodness you expressed for me at Adrianople, that I should ever see you again. But I am now convinced that I have really the happiness of pleasing you; and, if you knew how I speak of you amongst our ladies, you would be assured that you do me justice in making me your friend.' She placed me in the corner of the sofa, and I spent the afternoon in her conversation, with the greatest pleasure in the world.

"The Sultana Hafitén is, what one would naturally expect to find a Turkish lady, willing to oblige, but not knowing how to go about it; and it is easy to see in her manner that she has lived secluded from the world. But Fatima has all the politeness and good-breeding of a court; with an air that inspires at once respect and tenderness; and now that I understand her language, I find her wit as agreeable as her beauty. She is very curious after the manners of other countries, and has not the partiality for her own so common in little minds. A Greek that I carried with me, who had never seen her before (nor could have been admitted now, if she had not been in my train), shewed that surprise at her beauty and manners which is unavoidable at the first sight, and said to me in Italian, '*This is no Turkish lady, she is certainly some Christian.*' Fatima guessed she spoke of her, and asked what she said. I would not have told her, thinking she would have been no better pleased with the compliment than one of our court beauties to be told she had the air of a Turk; but the Greek lady told it to her; and she smiled, saying, '*It is not the first time I have heard so: my mother was a Poloneze, taken at the siege of Caminiec; and my father used to rally me, saying, He believed his Christian wife had found some gallant; for that I had not the air of a Turkish girl.*' I assured her, that, if all the Turkish ladies were like her, it was absolutely necessary to confine them from public view, for the repose of mankind; and proceeded to tell her what a noise such a face as hers would make in London or Paris. '*I can't believe you,*' replied she agreeably; '*if beauty was so much valued in your country, as you say, they would never have suffered you to leave it.*' Perhaps, dear sister, you laugh at my vanity in repeating this compliment; but I only do it as I think it very well turned, and give it you as an instance of the spirit of her conversation.

"Her house was magnificently furnished, and very well fancied; her winter rooms being furnished with figured velvet on gold grounds, and those for summer with fine Indian quilting embroidered with gold. The houses of the great Turkish ladies are kept clean with as much nicety as those in Holland. This was situated in a high part of the town; and from the window of her summer apartment we had the prospect of the sea, the islands, and the Asian mountains."

It was with regret that Lady Mary prepared, at length, on Mr. Wortley's recall, to leave Constantinople, where she had become accustomed to "the air and the language;" and she expresses some fears, in spite of her "love of travelling," for the safety of her children during a long journey homewards.

"However," she philosophically observes, "I endeavour, upon this occasion, to do as I have hitherto done in all the odd turns of my life, turn them, if I can, to my diversion. In order to this, I ramble every day, wrapped up in my *ferigée* and *asmáck*, about Constantinople, and amuse myself with seeing all that is curious in it."

Their return was by all those fabled spots of Greece,—

> "The immortal islands and the well-known sea,"

where

> "Not a mountain rears its head unsung,"

scenes familiar now to English travellers, and for ever sacred to Byron and Lady Mary.

Lady Mary passed no hallowed place sung by Homer without pausing to visit it; and in this pursuit Mr. Wortley's congenial taste agreed with her own.

"While," she writes, "I viewed these celebrated fields and rivers I admired the exact geography of Homer, whom I had in my hand. Almost every epithet he gives to a mountain or plain is still just for it; and I spent several hours here in as agreeable cogitations as ever Don Quixote had on Mount Montesinos. We sailed, next night, to the shore where 'tis vulgarly reported Troy stood; and I took the pains of rising at two in the morning, to view coolly those ruins which are commonly showed to strangers, and which the Turks call *Eski-Stamboul,* i. e. Old Constantinople. * * * I hired an ass, (the only *voiture* to be had there,) that I might go some miles into the country, and take a tour round the ancient walls, which are of a vast extent."

Lady Mary never dwells too long on any description; her learning is always ready, her memory abundant, and her exquisite taste keeps all in harmony: exactly at the right moment, some playful sally of wit carries off her reader, bewildered almost with the knowledge she displays, to some amusing image. This style of hers, so feminine and so agreeable, has been imitated, seldom successfully, and sometimes clumsily enough to degenerate into affectation and vulgarity: no one whose mind is not as delicately tuned as that of the fascinating Lady Mary herself, can venture on the same manner of relating the same adventures.

"I will pass by," she exclaims, "all the other islands with this general reflection, that 'tis impossible to imagine any thing more agreeable than this journey would have been two or three thousand years since, when, after *drinking a dish of tea* with Sappho, I might have gone the same evening to visit the temple of Homer, in Chios, and passed this voyage in taking plans of magnificent temples, delineating the miracles of statuaries, and conversing with the most polite and most gay of mankind. Alas! art is extinct here; the wonders of nature alone remain; and it was with vast pleasure I observed those of Mount Etna, whose flame appears very bright in the night, many leagues off at sea, and fills the head with a thousand conjectures."

With Mr. Wortley to explain to and assist her, the indefatigable traveller, alive to every beauty of nature and art, particularly when connected with classical recollections, in which she possessed an immense advantage over most of her sex, continued her delighted way to Genoa and Turin. Her account of Genoa, and the habits and manners of the Genoese, is too entertaining to be omitted:—

TO THE COUNTESS OF MAR.

"Genoa, Aug. 28, O. S. 1718.

"I beg your pardon, my dear sister, that I did not write to you from Tunis, the only opportunity I have had since I left Constantinople. But the heat there was so excessive, and the light so bad for the sight, I was half blind by writing one letter to the Abbé ——, and durst not go to write many others I had designed; nor, indeed, could I have entertained you very well out of that barbarous country. I am now surrounded with subjects of pleasure, and so much charmed with the beauties of Italy, that I should think it a kind of ingratitude not to offer a little praise in return for the diversion I have had here. I am in the house of Mrs. d'Avenant, at St. Pierre d'Arena, and should be very unjust not to allow her a share of that praise I speak of, since her good humour and good company have very much contributed to render this place agreeable to me.

"Genoa is situated in a very fine bay; and being built on a rising hill, intermixed with gardens, and beautified with the most excellent architecture, gives a very fine prospect off at sea; though it lost much of its beauty in my eyes, having been accustomed to that of Constantinople. The Genoese were once masters of several islands in the Archipelago, and all that part of Constantinople which is now called Galata. Their betraying the Christian cause, by facilitating the taking of Constantinople by the Turk, deserved what has since happened to them, even the loss of all their conquests on that side to those infidels. They are at present far from rich, and are despised by the French, since their Doge was forced by the late King to go in person to Paris, to ask pardon for such a trifle as the arms of France over the house of the envoy being spattered with dung in the night. This, I suppose, was done by some of the Spanish faction, which still makes up the majority here, though they dare not openly declare it. The ladies affect the French habit, and are more genteel than those they imitate. I do not doubt but the custom of cecisbeos has very much improved their airs. I know not whether you ever heard of those animals. Upon my word, nothing but my own eyes could have convinced me there were any such upon earth. The fashion began here, and is now received all over Italy, where the husbands are not such terrible creatures as we represent them. There are none among them such brutes as to pretend to find fault with a custom so well established, and so politically founded, since I am assured that it was an expedient first found out by the senate, to put an end to those family hatreds which tore their state to pieces, and to find employment for those young men who were forced to cut one another's throats *pour passer le temps;* and it has succeeded so well, that, since the institution of cecisbei, there has been nothing but peace and good humour among them. These are gentlemen who devote themselves to the service of a particular lady (I mean a married one, for the virgins are all invisible, and confined to convents): they are obliged to wait on her to all public places, such as the plays, operas, and assemblies (which are here called *Conversations*), where they wait behind her chair, take care of her fan and gloves if she play, have the privilege of whispers, &c. When she goes out, they serve her instead of lacquies, gravely trotting by her chair. 'Tis their business to prepare for her a present against any day of public appearance, not forgetting that of her own name:* in short, they are to spend all their time and money in her service, who rewards them accordingly (for opportunity they want none); but the husband is not to have the impudence to suppose this any other than pure Platonic friendship. 'Tis true, they endeavour to give her a cecisbeo of their own choosing; but when the lady happens not to be of the same taste, as that often happens, she never fails to bring it about to have one of her own fancy. In former times, one beauty used to have eight or ten of these humble admirers; but those days of plenty and humility are no more: men grow more scarce and saucy; and every lady is forced to content herself with one at a time.

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* That is, the day of the saint after whom she is called.

"You may see in this place the *glorious liberty* of a republic, or more properly, an aristocracy, the common people being here as errant slaves as the French; but the old nobles pay little respect to the Doge, who is but two years in his office, and whose wife, at that very time, assumes no rank above another noble lady. 'Tis true, the family of Andrea Doria (that great man, who restored them that liberty they enjoy) have some particular privileges: when the senate found it necessary to put a stop to the luxury of dress, forbidding the wearing of jewels and brocades, they left them at liberty to make what expence they pleased. I look with great pleasure on the statue of that hero, which is in the court belonging to the house of Duke Doria. This puts me in mind of their palaces, which I can never describe as I ought. Is it not enough that I say they are, most of them, the design of Palladio? The street called Strada Nova is perhaps the most beautiful line of building in the world. I must particularly mention the vast palaces of Durazzo; those of the two Balbi, joined together by a magnificent colonnade; that of the

Imperiale at this village of St. Pierre d'Arena; and another of the Doria. The perfection of architecture, and the utmost profusion of rich furniture, are to be seen here, disposed with the most elegant taste and lavish magnificence. But I am charmed with nothing so much as the collection of pictures by the pencils of Raphael, Paulo Veronese, Titian, Caracci, Michael Angelo, Guido, and Corregio, which two I mention last as my particular favourites. I own I can find no pleasure in objects of horror; and, in my opinion, the more naturally a crucifix is represented, the more disagreeable it is. These, my beloved painters, shew nature, and shew it in the most charming light. I was particularly pleased with a Lucretia in the house of Balbi: the expressive beauty of that face and bosom gives all the passion of pity and admiration that could be raised in the soul by the finest poem on that subject. A Cleopatra of the same hand deserves to be mentioned; and I should say more of her, if Lucretia had not first engaged my eyes. Here are also some inestimable ancient bustos. The church of St. Lawrence is built of black and white marble, where is kept that famous plate of a single emerald, which is not now permitted to be handled, since a plot which they say was discovered to throw it on the pavement and break it—a childish piece of malice, which they ascribe to the King of Sicily, to be revenged for their refusing to sell it to him. The church of the Annunciation is finely lined with marble; the pillars are of red and white marble: that of St. Ambrose has been very much adorned by the Jesuits: but I confess, all the churches appeared so mean to me, after that of Sancta Sophia, I can hardly do them the honour of writing down their names.—But I hope you will own I have made good use of my time, in seeing so much, since 'tis not many days that we have been out of the quarantine, from which nobody is exempted coming from the Levant. Ours, indeed, was very much shortened, and very agreeably passed in M. d'Avenant's company, in the village of St. Pierre d'Arena, about a mile from Genoa, in a house built by Palladio, so well designed and so nobly proportioned, 'twas a pleasure to walk in it. We were visited here only by a few English, in the company of a noble Genoese, commissioned to see we did not touch one another. I shall stay here some days longer, and could almost wish it were for all my life; but mine, I fear, is not destined to so much tranquillity.

"I am, &c. &c."

At Lyons, however, she began to feel the effects of the great exertions she had made, and had scarcely arrived before she was seized with an alarming illness, and a fever so violent that she writes :—

"I believed for some time that all my journeys were ended here." Nevertheless she exclaims, "I am determined, as I think myself already out of danger, that the sore throat which still remains shall not confine me long. I am impatient to see the curiosities of this famous city, and more impatient to continue my journey to Paris."

To Pope she writes from Lyons, and cannot contain her "spleen" at the bad taste exhibited in the "French statues" in general, but that of Louis XIV. in particular :—

"In one of the most conspicuous parts of the town is the late King's statue set up, *trampling upon mankind.* I cannot forbear saying one word here of the French statues (for I never intend to mention any more of them), with their gilded full-bottomed wigs. If their King had intended to express in one image, *ignorance*, *ill-taste*, and *vanity*, his sculptors could have made no other figure so proper for that purpose as this statue, which represents the odd mixture of an old beau who had a mind to be a hero, with a bushel of curled hair on his head, and a gilt truncheon in his hand."

Her picture of the misery of *the people* which she observed on her journey to Paris, is strikingly contrasted with the flourishing state of the towns in France at the present day. Except the "magnificence of the palace," one might imagine a portrait of Ireland in our own time; but there, at least, there is nothing flourishing to contrast with the poverty! A terrible remedy was applied to those evils in France, which might be a lesson to all governments.

"I think nothing so terrible as objects of misery, except one had the godlike attribute of being able to redress them; and all the country villages in France show nothing else. While the post-horses are changed, the whole town comes out to beg, with such miserable starved faces, and thin tattered clothes, they need no other eloquence to persuade one of the wretchedness of their condition. This is all the French magnificence till you come to Fontainebleau, where you are showed *one thousand five hundred rooms* in the King's hunting-palace."

She speaks of the *immortal* carp in the fish-ponds at Fontainebleau, said, in her time, to be, some of them, eighty years old. Whether those identical patriarchs still exist, or are always succeeded by others equally aged, and of enormous growth, certain it is, that, in spite of all the revolutions and destructions in France, the carp at Fontainebleau maintain an eternal youth—or age.

Her horror of the French style of dressing, immediately after having admired the charming Turkish ladies in their careless costume, is amusing:—

"So fantastically absurd in their dress, so monstrously unnatural in their paints!—their hair cut short, and curled round their faces, and so loaded with powder, that it makes it look like white wool!—and on their cheeks, to their chins, unmercifully laid on a shining red japan, that glistens in a most flaming manner, so that they seem to have no resemblance to human faces."

Would it not seem that she was describing some South Sea islanders rather than the belles of Paris? but so strange and grotesque is fashion!

Lady Mary was agreeably surprised to meet her sister, the Countess of Mar, in Paris, neither of them being aware that the other was going there: this, after her late severe illness, must have been a great relief to her mind. Her opinions of the French capital are, like all she expresses, perfectly original: she always ventures on her own impressions, which are never otherwise than correct. For instance, she was rather struck with the *vastness* than the beauty of Versailles:—

"After having seen the exact proportions of the Italian buildings," she observes, "I thought the irregularity of it shocking. Trianon, in its littleness, pleased me better than Versailles, Marli better than either of them, but St. Cloud best of all; having the advantage of the Seine running at the bottom of the gardens, the great cascade, &c."

Her remarks on the streets of Paris are amusing at the present day:—

"In general, I think, Paris has the advantage of London in the neat pavement of the streets, and the regular lighting of them at nights, and in the proportion of the streets, the houses being all built of stone, and most of those belonging to people of quality, being beautified by gardens. But we certainly may boast of a town very near twice as large: and, when I have said that, I know nothing else we surpass it in."

Her arrival once more in England reads as strangely, in these days of steam-boats, as the recital of the rest of her want of accommodations a century ago:—

TO THE ABBÉ ———.

"Dover, Oct. 31, O.S. 1718.

"I am willing to take your word for it, that I shall really oblige you, by letting you know, as soon as possible, my safe passage over the water.

I arrived this morning at Dover, after being tossed a whole night in the packet-boat, in so violent a manner, that the master, considering the weakness of his vessel, thought it proper to remove the mail, and give us notice of the danger. We called a little fishing boat, which could hardly make up to us; while all the people on board us were crying to Heaven. It is hard to imagine one's self in a scene of greater horror than on such an occasion; and yet, shall I own it to you? though I was not at all willingly to be drowned, I could not forbear being entertained at the double distress of a fellow passenger. She was an English lady that I had met at Calais, who desired me to let her go over with me in my cabin. She had bought a fine point-head, which she was contriving to conceal from the custom-house officers. When the wind grew high, and our little vessel cracked, she fell very heartily to her prayers, and thought wholly of her soul. When it seemed to abate, she returned to the worldly care of her head-dress, and addressed herself to me——'*Dear madam, will you take care of this point? if it should be lost!——Ah, Lord, we shall all be lost!——Lord, have mercy on my soul!——Pray, madam, take care of this head-dress.*' This easy transition from her soul to her head-dress, and the alternate agonies that both gave her, made it hard to determine which she thought of greatest value. But, however, the scene was not so diverting, but I was glad to get rid of it, and be thrown into the little boat, though with some hazard of breaking my neck. It brought me safe hither; and I cannot help looking with partial eyes on my native land. That partiality was certainly given us by nature, to prevent rambling, the effect of an ambitious thirst after knowledge, which we are not formed to enjoy. All we get by it, is a fruitless desire of mixing the different pleasures and conveniences which are given to the different parts of the world, and cannot meet in any one of them. After having read all that is to be found in the languages I am mistress of, and having decayed my sight by midnight studies, I envy the easy peace of mind of a ruddy milk-maid, who, undisturbed by doubt, hears the sermon with humility every Sunday, not having confounded the sentiments of natural duty in her head by the vain enquiries of the schools, who may be more learned, yet, after all, must remain as ignorant. And, after having seen part of Asia and Africa, and almost made the tour of Europe, I think the honest English squire more happy, who verily believes the Greek wines less delicious than March beer; that the African fruits have not so fine a flavour as golden-pippins; that the beca figuas of Italy are not so well tasted as a rump of beef; and that, in short, there is no perfect enjoyment of this life out of Old England. I pray God I may think so for the rest of my life; and, since I must be contented with our scanty allowance of daylight, that I may forget the enlivening sun of Constantinople.

"I am, &c. &c."

Lady Mary was now returned to England, and once again resumed her old sway, both at court and in society. She went with her family to reside at Twickenham, chiefly through the persuasions of her devoted friend Pope, whose attachment to her at this time seemed to overstep the bounds of reason. Perhaps some of the most touching of his compositions the world may owe to the *real feeling* which this affection inspired; for, that he not only felt, but was unhappy in the fervency of his vain love, there can be no doubt. After this passion changed to hatred, he would fain have had the world believe that it had never existed; but no one, who understands human nature and a poet's feelings, can question the truth; that Lady Mary encouraged this preposterous attachment, any more than by a friendly and kind manner, there is no sort of evidence to prove. Her answers to his sentimental letters are as far from sympathy as possible; and when she finds him verging upon a declaration, which she seems sometimes to dread, she turns his romance into ridicule, as in the case of her reply, positively cold and harsh, to his sentimental history of the haymaking lovers: probably, knowing the poet's weakness, she assumed an insensibility which she did not feel, as a tale of distress seldom failed to interest her mind, though she assumed on this occasion the style she did, in order to check his approach to tenderness in her own particular.

She writes to her sister from Twickenham, evidently showing that she saw Pope much less frequently than he wished: his exquisite verses she suppressed, except to her sister, and appears annoyed at the publicity he was desirous of giving to his attachment.

"Twickenham, 1720.

"I have had no answer, dear sister, to a long letter that I writ to you a month ago; however, I shall continue letting you know (*de temps en temps*) what passes in this corner of the world 'till you tell me 'tis disagreeable. I shall say little of the death of our great minister, because the papers say so much.* I suppose that the same faithful historians give you regular accounts of the growth and spreading of the inoculation for the small-pox, which is become almost a general practice, attended with great success. I pass my time in a small snug set of dear intimates, and go very little into the *grand monde*, which has always had my hearty contempt. I see sometimes Mr. Congreve, and very seldom Mr. Pope, who continues to embellish his house at Twickenham. He has made a subterranean grotto, which he has furnished with looking glasses, and *they tell me* it has a very good effect. I here send you some verses addressed to Mr. Gay, who wrote him a congratulatory letter on the finishing his house. I stifled them here, and I beg they may die the same death at Paris, and never go further than your closet:—

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* James Craggs, Esq. Secretary of State, died February 15, 1720, aged thirty-five.

'Ah! friend, 'tis true—this truth you lovers know—
In vain my structures rise, my gardens grow,
In vain fair Thames reflects the double scenes
Of hanging mountains, and of sloping greens:
Joy lives not here; to happier seats it flies,
And only dwells where Wortley casts her eyes.

'What are the gay parterre, the chequer'd shade,
The morning bower, the ev'ning colonnade,
But soft recesses of uneasy minds,
To sigh unheard in, to the passing winds?
So the struck deer in some sequester'd part
Lies down to die, the arrow at his heart;
There, stretch'd unseen in coverts hid from day,
Bleeds drop by drop, and pants his life away.'*

My paper is done, and I beg you to send my lutestring of what colour your please."

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* In Pope's Works the last eight lines only are published as a fragment. After his quarrel with Lady M. W. M. he disingenuously suppressed the compliment conveyed in the preceding.

It was about this time that Pope solicited Lady Mary to sit for her picture to Sir Godfrey Kneller; he wrote her many letters on the subject, and spared no trouble or arrangement to induce her to give him up the necessary time. The following is one of his letters on the subject:—

POPE TO LADY MARY.

"Indeed, dear madam, it is not possible to tell you whether you give me, every day I see you, more pleasure or more respect; and, upon my word, whenever I see you after a day or two's absence, it is in just such view as that you yesterday had of your own writings. I find you still better than I could imagine, and think I was partial before to your prejudice. The picture (by Sir Godfrey Kneller) dwells really at my heart, and I have made a perfect passion of preferring your present face to your past. I know and thoroughly esteem yourself of this year. I know no more of Lady Mary Pierrepont than to admire at what I have heard of her, or be pleased with some fragments of her's, as I am with Sappho's. But now—I cannot say what I would say of you now. Only still give me cause to say you are good to me, and allow me as much of your person as Sir Godfrey can help me to. Upon conferring with him yesterday, I find he thinks it absolutely necessary to draw your face first, which, he says, can never be set right on your figure, if the drapery and posture be finished before. To give you as little trouble as possible, he purposes to draw your face with crayons, and finish it up at your own house in a morning; from whence he will transfer it to canvass, so that you need not go to sit at his house. This, I must observe, is a manner they seldom draw any but crowned heads; and I observe it with a secret pride and pleasure. Be so kind as to tell me if you care he should do this to-morrow at twelve. Though, if I am but assured from you of the thing, let the manner and time be what you best like: let every decorum you please be observed. I should be very unworthy of any favour from your hands, if I desired any at the expense of your quiet and conveniency in any degree.

"I have just received this pamphlet, which may divert you.

"I am sincerely yours,
A. Pope.

1720, Aug."

The poet's delight at the picture, when finished, was extreme, and these lines, given to Lady Mary, rewarded her condescension:—

"The playful smiles around the dimpled mouth,
That happy air of majesty and truth,

So would I draw, but oh! 'tis vain to try,
My narrow genius does the power deny—
The equal lustre of the heavenly mind
Where ev'ry grace and ev'ry virtue's joined.
Learning not vain, and wisdom not severe,
With greatness easy and with wit sincere,
With just description show the soul divine,
And the whole princess in my work should shine."

Lady Mary spent much time, at this period, in endeavouring to enforce the necessity of the adoption of inoculation by her own class, being convinced that others would follow the salutary example in due time. The following panegyric appeared in the "Plain Dealer," under the direction of Steele:—

"It is an observation of some historian, that England has owed to women the greatest blessings she has been distinguished by.

"In the case we are now upon, this reflection will stand justified. We are indebted to the reason and the courage of a lady for the introduction of *this art*, which gains such strength in its progress, that the memory of its illustrious foundress will be rendered sacred by it to future ages. This ornament to her sex and country, who ennobles her own nobility by her learning, wit, and virtues, accompanying her consort into Turkey, observed the benefit of this practice, with its frequency, even among those obstinate predestinarians, and brought it over for the service and safety of her native England, where she consecrated its first effects on the persons of her own fine children; and has already received this glory from it, that the influence of her example has reached as high as the blood royal, and our noblest and most ancient families, in confirmation of her happy judgment, add the daily experience of those who are most dear to them. It is a godlike delight that her reflection must be conscious of, when she considers to whom we owe, that many thousand British lives will be saved every year to the use and comfort of their country, after a general establishment of this practice.

"A good so lasting and so vast, that none of those wide endowments and deep foundations of public charity, which have made most noise in the world deserve at all to be compared with it.

"High o'er each sex, in double empire sit,
Protecting beauty and inspiring wit."

The chief cause of the hostility of Pope to Lady Mary seems to have arisen from jealousy of her intimacy with the Bristol family, and her distinction of Lord Hervey, whom he has condemned to fame as Lord Fanny. The talents of the latter were certainly not of a nature to cause him uneasiness, when brought into comparison with his own, nor could his person be very much more fascinating, if all the stories of his painting, &c., be true. The politics of Pope and Lord Hervey differed, and it galled him deeply to find that Lady Mary had thrown herself into the arms of the Whigs, whom he held in detestation. However, that the offence he took to the woman he had once idolized and deified in his verses was personal, there can be little doubt, even if he did never really declare his passion, and receive for his guerdon only unrestrained laughter from its object, as has been asserted. He could not but find that, when he placed himself in a rank with the gallants of the day, his infirmities told more than his genius; and he probably discovered, also, that the witty and satirical Lady Mary did not so much respect the one as to be blind to the other. She, who sent out the shafts of her wit on every side, was not likely to miss one so open to their aim as the invalid and deformed poet, who had ventured to assume the character of a lover to a beautiful and admired married woman.

Another cause combined to irritate Pope: Lady Mary not only treated his admiration with contempt, but her genius interfered with his own; and he was peculiarly sensitive on the subject of the world's opinion. He became, at length, jealous of her fame; and, alone as he stands for pre-eminent wit and power, nothing could be more absurd, except his jealousy of Lord Hervey; for the careless and volatile Lady Mary, with all her genius, could only compare, but could not vie with the master spirit of the age. Some of her lines are as good as his own, it may be confessed, but though her wit was as bitter and biting, she was not a poet like himself, and he could well have afforded to let the world mistake their numbers for a time, and occasionally impute to her verses which were, in reality, his own. Instead of this gallant indulgence, he actually stole her best lines, and, to the last, permitted it to be doubtful who was the author.

Her "Town Eclogues," which she at first confided to Pope, and which he assured her were as sacred as the pages of the Sibyls from vulgar eyes, were afterwards communicated to a favoured few, and to both Pope and Gay several of them are attributed, whether truly or not, cannot be positively pronounced. "The Basset Table," and "Drawing Room," are given to Pope; "The Toilet," to Gay. These satirical poems made a fearful sensation in the great world, and their popularity piqued the vanity of Pope; he wished for all the credit of their talent, but he dreaded the resentment of those who were attacked, and between his vanity and his meanness Lady Mary was sacrificed. Enemies to both widened the breach which was beginning to grow between them; all the sharp speeches which Lady Mary was in the habit of making were repeated to him; and, doubtless, much that she never said. Amongst other sayings, she was reported to have remarked, that "some called Pope, 'little nightingale'—all sound, and no sense."

Again, she was said to be the author of an epigram, which was much spread :—

> " Sure Pope and Orpheus were alike inspired,
> The blocks and beasts flocked round them and admired."

Whatever might have been the true cause of the quarrel between Pope and his once adored Lady Mary, his conduct, after their dispute, is a blot upon the fame of the great poet, which can never be obliterated. No provocation can excuse his unmanly spite and bitterness to her, and it is an incident in his life that his admirers would fain forget, if it were possible. His mighty talents, so ill-employed in blackening the character of an amiable woman, against whom he had awowedly no more cause of complaint than " that her wit was *too much for him*," unfortunately caused him to gain the end he desired, and Lady Mary has suffered, in consequence, in the opinion of posterity, though the injustice of giving credit to the spiteful insinuations of a disappointed and ridiculed suitor, is manifest enough.

The freedom of Lady Mary's style in her letters to her sister, is no argument against her propriety of conduct, the manners of the time considered, when delicacy was entirely banished from conversation, and the habits of the day had fallen into the utmost coarseness and want of refinement. That her letters to her sister are confidential, can be no excuse, because a person of delicate mind could never, under any circumstances, be otherwise than pure in thought and expression, whether writing familiarly or formally; but Lady Mary's letters are not immoral, they are continually ridiculing the vices of the times, and she uses occasional expressions not, in her time, considered incorrect, which to a modern eye are coarse and unseemly. The piquancy of her satire, and the quickness of her ridicule, are most conspicuous in her writings; and, in her general correspondence, her wit, taste, and spirit, cover all blemishes. Certain it is, that Lady Mary's coquetry did not decrease with her years; and she talks as familiarly of having *three lovers at once*, as of the masquerades and balls where she was in the habit of meeting them; but all her agreeable *badinage* is not to be taken for fact; and if her flirtations had not been sufficiently public and innocent, she would certainly have concealed them from her sister. How much Mr. Wortley entered into the spirit of the conquests she boasts of does not appear; for his name is seldom mentioned in her letters at this time, although she continually speaks of her children. Of her son, she says, in 1726, in relating the news of the day:—

"My blessed offspring has already made a great noise in the world. That young rake, my son, took to his heels t'other day, and transported his person to Oxford; being, in his own opinion, thoroughly qualified for the University. After a good deal of search we found and reduced him, much against his will, to the humble condition of a school-boy. It happens very luckily that the sobriety and discretion is on my daughter's side; I am sorry the ugliness is so too, for my son grows extreme handsome."

The Duke of Kingston, her father, died in 1726, and his death was quickly followed by that of Lady Gower, her sister; on which occasion she thus writes to the Countess of Mar:—

"1727.

"I had writ you a long letter, dear sister, and only wanted sealing it, when I was interrupted by a summons to my sister Gower's,* whom I never left since. She lasted from Friday to Tuesday, and died about eight o'clock, in such a manner as has made an impression on me not easily shaken off. We are now but two in the world, and it ought to endear us to one another. I am sure whatever I can serve my poor nieces and nephews in, shall not be wanting on my part. I won't trouble you with melancholy circumstances; you may easily imagine the affliction of Lord Gower and Lady Cheyne. I hope you will not let melancholy hurt your own health, which is truly dear to your affectionate sister."

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* Lady Gower died June 27, 1727.

As she advanced in years, her son gave her more and more concern, and the usual style of her letters show, in spite of the light character she assumes, how much sorrow she sees in perspective. She says to her sister :—

"I hear your daughter is a very fine young lady, and I wish you joy of it, as one of the greatest blessings of life. My girl gives me great prospect of satisfaction, but my young rogue of a son is the most ungovernable little rake that ever played truant. If I were inclined to lay worldly matters to heart, I could write a quire of complaints about it. You see no one is quite happy; though it is pretty much in my nature to console upon all occasions. I advise you to do the same, as the only remedy against the vexations of life, which, in my conscience, I think affords disagreeable to the highest ranks, and comforts to the very lowest; so that, upon the whole, things are more equally disposed among the sons of Adam than they are generally thought to be. * * *

"I am vexed by my young rogue of a son, who has contrived, at his age, to make himself the talk of the whole nation. He is gone knight-erranting —God knows where; and hitherto 'tis impossible to find him. You may judge of my uneasiness by what your own would be if dear Lady Fanny was lost. Nothing that ever happened to me has troubled me so much; I can hardly speak or write of it with tolerable temper; and I own it has changed mine to that degree, I have a mind to cross the water, and try what effect a new heaven and a new earth will have upon my spirit. There can be no situation in life in which the conversation of my dear sister will not administer some comfort to me."

The greatest grief that Lady Mary had yet met with was the conviction she felt of the unworthy character of her son, who, from a child, exhibited symptoms of an evil disposition. He had talent and invention, and a total disregard to truth. After continually distressing his mother by his bad conduct, he sealed his ruin by marrying a woman of low degree, considerably older than himself; and this person he forsook after a few weeks. He was then under age; and from that period he only reappeared on the stage in consequence of some misdemeanour, or extravagance, which drew the attention of the world and his family upon him. He was handsome in his person, agreeable, and plausible, but all that is known of his career is disgraceful and vexatious. Both his father and mother had a mean opinion of his abilities, and his irregular conduct was considered by them as arising from weakness of intellect; though he has sometimes been, without foundation, considered as possessing talent and the eccentricity sometimes attached to it.

The cause of Lady Mary's leaving England, in 1739, and remaining abroad two-and-twenty years, has never been satisfactorily explained. There is no evidence of any quarrel with Mr. Wortley, and her letters to him and her daughter, then married, are in her usual lively style,—affectionate, and kind, as if they were still on the same terms as ever. Her failing health was the first cause of her seeking a milder climate; and she directed her steps to Venice, where she hoped the change of scene would restore her. Her letters on the change she observed in France since her first visit are remarkable, and one would almost think they were written at the present day:—

TO MR. WORTLEY.

"Dijon, Aug. 18, 1739, N. S.

"I am at length arrived here very safely, and without any bad accident; and so much mended in my health, that I am surprized at it. France is so much improved, it would not be known to be the same country we passed through twenty years ago. Every thing I see speaks in praise of Cardinal Fleury: the roads are all mended, and the greater part of them paved as well as the streets of Paris, planted on both sides like the roads in Holland; and such good care taken against robbers, that you may cross the country with your purse in your hand: but as to travelling *incognita,* I may as well walk *incognita* in the Pall-Mall. There is not any town in France where there are no English, Scotch, or Irish families established; and I have met with people that have seen me (though often such as I do not remember to have seen) in every town I have passed through; and I think the farther I go, the more acquaintance I meet. Here are in this town no less than sixteen English families of fashion. Lord Mansel lodges in the house with me, and a daughter of Lord Bathurst's (Mrs. Whitshed) is in the same street. The Duke of Rutland is gone from hence some time ago, as Lady Peterborough told me at St. Omer's; which was one reason that determined me to come here, thinking to be quiet; but I find it impossible, and that will make me leave the place, after the return of this post. The French are more changed than their roads; instead of pale, yellow faces, wrapped up in blankets, as we saw them, the villages are all filled with fresh-coloured lusty peasants, in good clothes and clean linen. It is incredible what an air of plenty and content is over the whole country. I hope to hear, as soon as possible, that you are in good health."

FROM MR. WORTLEY TO LADY MARY.

"26 Aug. 1739.

"Though you are surprized, I am not at all, that your health is so much mended. I have hitherto found travelling a never failing remedy for any disorder of the head or stomach. They are occasioned by a settlement of humours, which are removed by exercise. I have not yet had the benefit of a journey to the North, but I hope I shall in a fortnight or three weeks. All things here are just as you left them, except the weather, which has been the warmest in August. The showers and clouds have been as frequent as in Cæsar's time, and will I fear continue so till the sun or the globe has undergone some great change. I answer yours of the 10th to-day, though it came but yesterday, because you write you will stay at Dijon 'till the return of the post."

On her arrival at Venice, she thus writes to her husband:—

"Venice, Sept. 25, 1739.

"I am at length happily arrived here, I thank God: I wish it had been my original plan, which would have saved me some money and fatigue; though I have not much reason to regret the last, since I am convinced it has greatly contributed to the restoration of my health. I met nothing disagreeable on my journey but too much company. I find (contrary to the rest of the world) I did not think myself so considerable as I am; for I verily believe, if one of the pyramids of Egypt had travelled, it could not have been more followed; and if I had received all the visits that have been intended me, I should have stopped at least two years in every town I came through. I liked Milan so well, that if I had not desired all my letters to be directed hither, I think I should have been tempted to stay there. One of the pleasures I found there was the Borromean library, where all strangers have free access; and not only so, but liberty, on giving a note for it, to take any printed book home with them. I saw several curious manuscripts there; and, as a proof of my recovery, I went up to the very top of the dome of the great church without any assistance. I am now in a lodging on the Great Canal. Lady Pomfret is not yet arrived, but I expect her very soon; and if the air does not disagree with me, I intend seeing the carnival here. I hope your health continues, and that I shall hear from you very soon."

After visiting Rome, Naples, Florence, and other Italian towns, her health continuing to improve, Lady Mary journeyed to Geneva, whether with the intention of ultimately returning home, is not certain, but, after remaining here some time, she found all her old complaints returning, and removed to Chamberry in Savoy. As usual, her desire seems here, as in other places, to derive useful information for the benefit of her fellow-creatures, and time has proved that her opinions were generally correct. From Chamberry she thus writes to her husband: the gravity of tone of her correspondence now is strikingly contrasted with that of her former lively manner:—

"Chamberry, Jan. 25, 1741-2.

"I had the pleasure of receiving yours of Nov. 25 yesterday, and am very glad to find by it that you are arrived in London in good health. I heartily wish you the continuance of it. My deafness lasted only a fortnight, though it frighted me very much. I have had no return of it since. Your advice to Mr. M. was certainly right, but I am not surprized he did not follow it. I believe there are few men in the world (I never knew any) capable of such a strength of resolution as yourself. I have answered your letter from Vienna, but as you do not mention having received mine, perhaps it is lost. I shall add a word or two more concerning the use of Turkish wheat. It is generally declaimed against by all the doctors; and some of them have wrote treatises to shew the ill consequences of it, in which they say, that since it has been sown (which is not above 100 years,) it may be proved from the registers that the mortality is greater amongst the country people than it was formerly. I believe that may be true in regard to children, who are apt to eat greedily, it being very heavy of digestion; but to those whose stomachs can bear it, and eat it with moderation, I am persuaded it is a clean strengthening diet. I have made strict observations and enquiries on the health and manner of life of the countries in which I have resided, and have found little difference in the length of life. It is true, gout, stone, and small-pox (so frequent with us), are little known here: in recompense, pleurisies, peripneumonies, and fevers (especially malignant), are far more usual: and I am clearly of opinion that, if an exact computation were made, as many die in Brescia as in London, in proportion to the different numbers. I have not heard from my daughter for a long time; which may be occasioned by the bad weather. I hope both you and she are well. I have wrote to her many long letters."

Mr. Wortley writes to Lady Mary in the most confidential manner respecting their unfortunate son: his letter is dated 22d March, 1741-2; in it he requested her to see him privately, and give him advice as to his future conduct, with a view to engage him in some pursuit which might separate him from his dissolute companions, and change the course of his life. He expressed a wish to go into the army, and his father had been advised to consent to his doing so: he requests Lady Mary to speak to her son, in their interview "in the most calm and gentle way possible, that he may be invited to open himself freely."

"I incline," he continues, "to think he has been made an enthusiast in Holland, and you will do well to try thoroughly whether he is in earnest, and likely to continue so. * * * I believe he will always appear a weak man. The single question seems to be, whether he will be one of those weak men that will follow the advice of those who wish them well, or be governed by his own fancies, or companions that will make a prey of him."

In speaking of his daughter, he coldly says—

"Lord and Lady Bute seem to live well together. They lost their son, who was above a year old, on the 16th; he had fits and a fever. The surgeons say his brains were too large, and occasioned the fits. They are both retired to Richmond for ten days or a fortnight."

To this letter of her husband, Lady Mary returned the following reply:—

"Lyons, April 13, N. S. 1742.

"I am very glad you have been prevailed on to let our son take a commission: if you had prevented it, he would have always said, and perhaps thought, and persuaded other people, you had hindered his rising in the world; though I am fully persuaded that he can never make a tolerable figure in any station of life. When he was at Morins, on his first leaving France, I then tried to prevail with him to serve the Emperor as volunteer; and represented to him that a handsome behaviour one campaign might go a great way in retrieving his character; and offered to use my interest with you (which I said I had no doubt would succeed) to furnish him with a handsome equipage. He then answered, he supposed I wished him killed out of the way. I am afraid his pretended reformation is not very sincere. I wish time may prove me in the wrong. * * *

"It is very disagreeable to me to converse with one, from whom I do not expect to hear a word of truth, and who, I am very sure, will repeat many things that never passed in our conversation. You see the most solemn assurances are not binding from him, since he could come to London in opposition to your commands, after having so frequently protested he would not move a step but by your order. However, as you insist on my seeing him, I will do it, and think Valence the properest town for that interview; it is but two days' journey from this place, it is in Dauphiné."

TO MR. WORTLEY.

"April 25, N. S. Lyons, 1742.

"On recollection (however inconvenient it may be to me), I am not sorry to converse with my son. I shall at least have the satisfaction of making a clear judgment of his behaviour and temper: which I shall deliver to you in the most sincere and unprejudiced manner. You need not apprehend that I shall speak to him in passion. I do not know that I ever did in my life. I am not apt to be overheated in discourse, and am so far prepared, even for the worst on his side, that I think nothing he can say can alter the resolution I have taken of treating him with calmness. Both reason and interest (were I inclined to follow blindly the dictates of either) would determine me to wish him your heir rather than a stranger; but I think myself obliged both by honour and by conscience, and my regard for you, no way to deceive you; and

I confess, hitherto I see nothing but falsehood and weakness through his whole conduct. It is possible his person may be altered since I saw him, but his figure then was very agreeable and his manner insinuating. I very well remember the professions he made to me, and do not doubt he is lavish of them to other people. Perhaps Lord Carteret may think him no ill match for an ugly girl that sticks on his hands. The project of breaking his marriage shews at least his devotion counterfeit, since I am sensible it cannot be done but by false witness. *His wife is not young enough to get gallants, nor rich enough to buy them.*

"I made choice of Valence for our meeting as a town where we are not likely to find any English, and he may if he pleases be quite unknown; which is hardly possible to be in any capital town either of France or Italy. Here are many English of the trading sort of people, who are more likely to be inquisitive and talkative than any other. Near Chamberry there is a little colony of English, who have undertaken the working the mines in Savoy; in which they find very pure silver, of which I have seen several cakes of about eighty ounces each."

The desire of her husband that she should see her son, seems to have agitated Lady Mary extremely, as she felt convinced that he was not to be depended on, for wherever she went she heard instances of his dishonesty and immorality which shocked and distressed her extremely: however, she did not oppose Mr. Wortley's wish, and they met. This is her account of this strange man:—

TO MR. WORTLEY.

"Avignon, June 10, N.S. 1742.

"I am just returned from passing two days with our son, of whom I will give you the most exact account I am capable of. He is so much altered in person, I should scarcely have known him. He has entirely lost his beauty, and looks at least seven years older than he did; and the wildness that he always had in his eyes is so much encreased it is downright shocking, and I am afraid will end fatally. He is grown fat, but he is still genteel, and has an air of politeness that is agreeable. He speaks French like a Frenchman, and has got all the fashionable expressions of that language, and a volubility of words which he always had, and which I do not wonder should pass for wit, with inconsiderate people. His behaviour is perfectly civil, and I found him very submissive; but in the main, no way really improved in his understanding, which is exceedingly weak; and I am convinced he will always be led by the person he converses with, either right or wrong, not being capable of forming any fixed judgment of his own. As to his enthusiasm, if he had it, I suppose he has already lost it; since I could perceive no turn of it in all his conversation. But with his head I believe it is possible to make him a monk one day and a Turk three days after. He has a flattering insinuating manner, which naturally prejudices strangers in his favour. He began to talk to me in the usual silly cant I have so often heard from him, which I shortened by telling him I desired not to be troubled with it; that professions were of no use where actions were expected; and that the only thing could give me hopes of a good conduct was regularity and truth. He very readily agreed to all I said (as indeed he has always done when he has not been hot-headed). I endeavoured to convince him how favourably he has been dealt with, his allowance being much more than, had I been his father, I would have given in the same case. The Prince of Hesse, who is now married to the Princess of England, lived some years at Geneva on 500*l.* per annum. Lord Hervey sent his son at sixteen thither, and to travel afterwards, on no larger pension than 200*l.*; and, though without a governour, he had reason enough, not only to live within the compass of it, but carried home little presents to his father and mother, which he shewed me at Turin. In short, I know there is no place so expensive, but a prudent single man may live in it on one 300*l.* per annum, and an extravagant one may run out ten thousand in the cheapest. 'Had you (said I to him) thought rightly, or would have regarded the advice I gave you in all my letters, while in the little town of Islestein, you would have laid up 150*l.* per annum; you would now have had 750*l.* in your pocket; which would have almost paid your debts, and such a management would have gained you the esteem of the reasonable part of the world.' I perceived this reflection, which he had never made himself, had a very great weight with him. He would have excused part of his follies, by saying Mr. G. had told him it became Mr. W.'s son to live handsomely. I answered, that whether Mr. G. had said so or no, the good sense of the thing was no way altered by it; that the true figure of a man was the opinion the world had of his sense and probity, and not the idle expenses, which were only respected by foolish and ignorant people; that his case was particular, he had but too publicly shewn his inclination to vanities, and the most becoming part he could now act would be owning the ill use he had made of his father's indulgence, and professing to endeavour to be no farther expence to him, instead of scandalous complaints, and being always at his last shirt and last guinea, which any man of spirit would be ashamed to own. I prevailed so far with him that he seemed very willing to follow this advice; and I gave him a paragraph to write to G., which I suppose you will easily distinguish from the rest of his letter. He asked me whether you had settled your estate. I made answer that I did not doubt (like all other wise men) you always had a will by you; but that you had certainly not put any thing out of your power to change. On that he began to insinuate, that if I could prevail on you to settle the estate on him, I might expect any thing from his gratitude. I made him a very clear and positive answer in these words; 'I hope your father will outlive me, and if I should be so unfortunate to have it otherwise, I do not believe he will leave me in your power. But was I sure of the contrary, no interest, nor no necessity, shall ever make me act against my honour and conscience; and I plainly tell you, that I will never persuade your father to do any thing for you 'till I think you deserve it.' He answered by great promises of good behaviour, and œconomy. He is highly delighted with the prospect of going into the army: and mightily pleased with the good reception he had from Lord Stair; though I find it amounts to no more than telling him he was sorry he had already named his aids-de-camp, and otherwise should have been glad of him in that post. He says Lord Carteret has confirmed to him his promise of a commission.

"The rest of his conversation was extremely gay. The various things he has seen has given him a superficial universal knowledge. He really knows most of the modern languages, and if I could believe him, can read Arabic, and has read the Bible in Hebrew. He said it was impossible for him to avoid going back to Paris; but he promised me to lie but one night there, and to go to a town six posts from thence on the Flanders road, where he would wait your orders, and go by the name of Mons. du Durand, a Dutch officer; under which name I saw him. These are the most material passages, and my eyes are so much tired I can write no more at this time. I gave him 240 livres for his journey."

TO MR. WORTLEY.

"Oct. 18, 1743.

"I received your's of September 21, O.S. this day, October 18, N.S. and am always glad to hear of your health. I can never be surprized at any sort of folly or extravagance of my son. Immediately on leaving me at Orange, after the most solemn promises of reformation, he went to Montelimart, which is but one day's post from thence, where he behaved himself with as much vanity and indiscretion as ever. I had my intelligence from people who did not know my relation to him; and I do not trouble you with the particulars, thinking it needless to expose his character to you, who are so well acquainted with it. I am persuaded whoever protects him will be very soon convinced of the impossibility of his behaving like a rational creature."

While she was at Avignon, she seems to have frightened Mr. Wortley by a projected building, which, after all, appears to have been no more than a summer-house: she thus accounts for the report which alarmed him:—

"Avignon, Dec. 20, 1743.

"The whole expence which I have contracted for is but twenty-six pounds. You know the situation of this town is on the meeting of the Rhone and Durance. On the one side of it, within the walls, was formerly a fortress built on a very high rock; they say it was destroyed by lightning: one of the towers was left partly standing, the walls being a yard in thickness: this was made use of for some time as a public mill, but the height making it inconvenient for the carriage of meal, it has stood useless many years. Last summer in the hot evenings I walked often thither, where I always found a fresh breeze, and the most beautiful land prospect I ever saw (except Wharncliffe); being a view of the windings of two great rivers, and overlooking the whole country, with part of Languedoc and Provence. I was so much charmed with it, that I said in company, that, if that old mill were mine, I would turn it into a belvidere; my words were repeated, and the two consuls waited on me soon after, with a donation from the town of the mill and the land about it: I have added a dome to it, and made it a little rotunda for the 'foresaid sum. I have also amused myself with patching up an inscription, which I have communicated to the Archbishop, who is much delighted with it; but it is not placed, and perhaps never will be."

Her health appeared in an alarming state at this period, and she removed to Louvere for the waters, from whence she thus writes to her daughter:—

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

"Louvere, July 21, N.S. 1747.

"Dear Child,

"I am now in a place the most beautifully romantic I ever saw in my life: it is the Tunbridge of this part of the world, to which I was sent by the doctor's order, my ague often returning, notwithstanding the loads of bark I have taken. To say truth, I have no reason to repent my journey, though I was very unwilling to undertake it, it being ten miles, half by land and half by water; the land so stony I was almost shook to pieces, and I had the ill luck to be surprized with a storm on the lakes, that if I had not been near a little port (where I passed a night in a very poor inn), the vessel must have been lost. A fair wind brought me hither next morning early. I found a very good lodging, a great deal of good company, and a village in many respects resembling Tunbridge Wells, not only in the quality of the waters, which is the same, but in the manner of the buildings, most of the houses being separate at little distances, and all built on the sides of hills, which indeed are far different from those of Tunbridge, being six times as high: they are really vast rocks of different figures, covered with green moss, or short grass, diversified by tufts of trees, little woods, and here and there vineyards, but no other cultivation, except gardens like those on Richmond-hill. The whole lake of Tséo, which is twenty-five miles long, and three broad, is all surrounded with these impassable mountains, the sides of which, towards the bottom, are so thick set with villages (and in most of them gentlemen's seats), that I do not believe there is any where above a mile distance one from another, which adds very much to the beauty of the prospect.

"We have an opera here, which is performed three times in the week. I was at it last night, and should have been surprized at the neatness of the scenes, goodness of the voices, and justness of the actors, if I had not remembered I was in Italy. Several gentlemen jumped into the orchestre, and joined in the concert, which I suppose is one of the freedoms of the place, for I never saw it in any great town. I was yet more amazed, (while the actors were dressing for the farce that concludes the entertainment,) to see one of the principal among them, and as errant a *petit maître* as if he had passed all his life at Paris, mount the stage, and present us with a cantata of his own performing. He had the pleasure of being almost deafened with applause. The ball began afterwards, but I was not witness of it, having accustomed myself to such early hours, that I was half asleep before the opera finished: it begins at ten o'clock, so that it was one before I could get to bed, though I had supped before I went, which is the custom.

"I am much better pleased with the diversions on the water, where all the town assembles every night, and never without music; but we have none so rough as trumpets, kettle-drums, and French horns: they are all violins, lutes, mandolins, and flutes doux. Here is hardly a man that does not excel in some of these instruments, which he privately addresses to the lady of his affections, and the public has the advantage of it by his adding to the number of the musicians.

"The fountain where we drink the waters rises between two hanging hills, and is overshadowed with large trees, that give a freshness in the hottest time of the day. The provisions are all excellent, the fish of the lake being as large and well tasted as that of Geneva, and the mountains abounding in game, particularly black cocks, which I never saw in any other part of Italy: but none of the amusements here would be so effectual to raising my spirits as a letter from you."

Her letters to her daughter, wherever she chanced to be, always breathe the same affectionate anxiety for her welfare and that of her children. The following she writes from Louvere in 1753 :—

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

"Louvere, March 6, 1753.

"I cannot help writing a sort of apology for my last letter, foreseeing that you will think it wrong, or at least Lord Bute will be extremely shocked at the proposal of a learned education for daughters, which the generality of men believe to be as great a profanation, as the clergy would do, if the laity should presume to exercise the functions of the priesthood. I desire you would take notice, I would not have learning enjoined them as a task, but permitted as a pleasure, if their genius leads them naturally to it. I look upon my granddaughters as a sort of lay nuns: destiny may have laid up other things for them, but they have no reason to expect to pass their time otherwise than their aunts do at present; and I know, by experience, it is in the power of study not only to make solitude tolerable, but agreeable. I have now lived almost seven years in a stricter retirement than yours in the Isle of Bute, and can assure you, I have never had half an hour heavy on my hands, for want of something to do. Whoever will cultivate their own mind, will find full employment. Every virtue does not only require great care in the planting, but as much daily solicitude in cherishing, as exotic fruits and flowers. The vices and passions (which I am afraid are the natural product of the soil) demand perpetual weeding. Add to this the search after knowledge (every branch of which is entertaining), and the longest life is too short for the pursuit of it; which, though in some regard confined to very strait limits, leaves still a vast variety of amusements to those capable of tasting them, which is utterly impossible to be attained by those that are blinded by prejudice, the certain effect of an ignorant education. My own was one of the worst in the world, being exactly the same as Clarissa Harlowe's: her pious Mrs. Norton so perfectly resembling my governess, who had been nurse to my mother, I could almost fancy the author was acquainted with her. She took so much pains, from my infancy, to fill my head with superstitious tales and false notions, it was none of her fault that I am not at this day afraid of witches and hobgoblins, or turned methodist. Almost all girls are bred after this manner. I believe you are the only woman (perhaps I might say, person) that never was either frighted or cheated into any thing by your parents. I can truly affirm, I never deceived any body in my life, excepting (which I confess has often happened undesigned) by speaking plainly; as Earl Stanhope used to say (during his ministry) he always imposed on the foreign ministers by telling them the naked truth, which, as they thought *impossible* to come from the mouth of a statesman, they never failed to write information to their respective courts directly contrary to the assurances he gave them. Most people confound the ideas of sense and cunning, though there are really no two things in nature more opposite: it is, in part, from this false reasoning, the unjust custom prevails of debarring our sex from the advantages of learning, the men fancying the improvement of our understandings would only furnish us with more art to deceive them, which is directly contrary to the truth. Fools are always enterprizing, not seeing the difficulties of deceit, or the ill consequences of detection. I could give many examples of ladies whose ill conduct has been very notorious, which has been owing to that ignorance which has exposed them to idleness, which is justly called the mother of mischief. There is nothing so like the education of a woman of quality as that of a prince: they are taught to dance, and the exterior part of what is called good breeding, which, if they attain, they are extraordinary creatures in their kind, and have all the accomplishments required by their directors. The same characters are formed by the same lessons, which inclines me to think (if I dare say it) that nature has not placed us in an inferior rank to men, no more than the females of other animals, where we see no distinction of capacity; though, I am persuaded, if there was a commonwealth of rational horses (as Doctor Swift has supposed), it would be an established maxim among them, that a mare could *not* be taught to pace. I could add a great deal on this subject, but I am not now endeavouring to remove the prejudices of mankind; my only design is, to point out to my granddaughters the method of being contented with that retreat, to which unforeseen circumstances may oblige them, and which is perhaps preferable to all the show of public life. It has always been my inclination. Lady Stafford (who knew me better than any body else in the world, both from her own just discernment, and my heart being ever as open to her as myself) used to tell me, my true vocation was a monastery; and I now find, by experience, more sincere pleasures with my books and garden, than all the flutter of a court could give me.

"If you follow my advice in relation to Lady Mary, my correspondence may be of use to her; and I shall very willingly give her those instructions that may be necessary in the pursuit of her studies. Before her age I was in the most regular commerce with my grandmother, though the difference of our time of life was much greater, she being past forty-five when she married my grandfather. She died at ninety-six, retaining, to the last, the vivacity and clearness of her understanding, which was very uncommon. You cannot remember her, being then in your nurse's arms.

I conclude with repeating to you, I only recommend, but am far from commanding, which I think I have no right to do. I tell you my sentiments, because you desired to know them, and hope you will receive them with some partiality, as coming from

"Your most affectionate mother,
"M. Wortley."

Her description of her residence, and the way she spends her time at Louvere, where alone her health seemed to improve, is in her early style:—

"I have been these six weeks, and still am, at my dairy-house, which joins to my garden. I believe I have already told you it is a long mile from the castle, which is situate in the midst of a very large village, once a considerable town, part of the walls still remaining, and has not vacant ground enough about it to make a garden, which is my greatest amusement, it being now troublesome to walk, or even go in the chaise till the evening. I have fitted up in this farm-house a room for myself, that is to say, strewed the floor with rushes, covered the chimney with moss and branches, and adorned the room with basons of earthen ware (which is made here to great perfection) filled with flowers, and put in some straw chairs, and a couch bed, which is my whole furniture. This spot of ground is so beautiful, I am afraid you will scarce credit the description, which, however, I can assure you, shall be very literal, without any embellishment from imagination. It is on a bank, forming a kind of peninsula, raised from the river Oglio fifty feet, to which you may descend by easy stairs cut in the turf, and either take the air on the river, which is as large as the Thames at Richmond, or by walking an avenue two hundred yards on the side of it, you find a wood of a hundred acres, which was all ready cut into walks and ridings when I took it. I have only added fifteen bowers, in different views, with seats of turf. They were easily made, here being a large quantity of underwood, and a great number of wild vines, which twist to the top of the highest trees, and from which they make a very good sort of wine they call *brusco.* I am now writing to you in one of these arbours, which is so thick shaded, the sun is not troublesome, even at noon. Another is on the side of the river, where I have made a camp kitchen, that I may take the fish, dress, and eat it immediately, and at the same time see the barks, which ascend or descend every day to or from Mantua, Guastalla, or Pont de Vie, all considerable towns. This little wood is carpeted, in their succeeding seasons, with violets and strawberries, inhabited by a nation of nightingales, and filled with game of all kinds, excepting deer and wild boar, the first being unknown here, and not being large enough for the other.

"My garden was a plain vineyard when it came into my hands not two years ago, and it is, with a small expence, turned into a garden that (apart from the advantage of the climate) I like better than that of Kensington. The Italian vineyards are not planted like those in France, but in clumps, fastened to trees planted in equal ranks (commonly fruit-trees), and continued in festoons from one to another, which I have turned into covered galleries of shade, that I can walk in the heat without being incommoded by it. I have made a dining-room of verdure, capable of holding a table of twenty covers; the whole ground is three hundred and seventeen feet in length, and two hundred in breadth. You see it is far from large; but so prettily disposed (though I say it), that I never saw a more agreeable rustic garden, abounding with all sorts of fruit, and producing a variety of wines. I would send you a pipe, if I did not fear the customs would make you pay too dear for it. I believe my description gives you but an imperfect idea of my garden. Perhaps I shall succeed better in describing my manner of life, which is as regular as that of any monastery. I generally rise at six, and as soon as I have breakfasted, put myself at the head of my needle-women, and work with them till nine. I then inspect my dairy, and take a turn among my poultry, which is a very large enquiry. I have, at present, two hundred chickens, besides turkies, geese, ducks, and pea-cocks. All things have hitherto prospered under my care; my bees and silk-worms are doubled, and I am told that, without accidents, my capital will be so in two years' time. At eleven o'clock I retire to my books: I dare not indulge myself in that pleasure above an hour. At twelve I constantly dine, and sleep after dinner till about three. I then send for some of my old priests, and either play at piquet or whist, till 'tis cool enough to go out. One evening I walk in my wood, where I often sup, take the air on horseback the next, and go on the water the third. The fishery of this part of the river belongs to me; and my fisherman's little boat (to which I have a green lutestring awning) serves me for a barge. He and his son are my rowers without any expence, he being very well paid by the profit of the fish, which I give him on condition of having every day one dish for my table. Here is plenty of every sort of fresh water fish (excepting salmon); but we have a large trout so like it, that I, who have almost forgot the taste, do not distinguish it.

"We are both placed properly in regard to our different times of life: you amidst the fair, the gallant, and the gay; I in a retreat, where I enjoy every amusement that solitude can afford. I confess I sometimes wish for a little conversation; but I reflect that the commerce of the world gives more uneasiness than pleasure, and quiet is all the hope that can reasonably be indulged at my age. My letter is of an unconscionable length; I should ask your pardon for it, but I had a mind to give you an idea of my mode of passing my time,—take it as an instance of the affection of, dear child,

"Your most affectionate mother,
M. Wortley."

Her health was now so frequently disordered, that, as she observes to her daughter,—

"I begin to be as weary of it as mending old lace; when it is patched in one place, it breaks out in another. I can expect nothing better at my time of life."

Occasionally she appeared free from pain, and then her usual liveliness breaks forth in her letters, as, for instance, in the following:—

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

"Louvere, Sept. 30, 1757.

"My dear Child,

"Lord Bute has been so obliging as to let me know your safe delivery, and the birth of another daughter:* may she be as meritorious in your eyes as you are in mine! I can wish nothing better to you both, though I have some reproaches to make you. Daughter! daughter! don't call names; you are always abusing my pleasures, which is what no mortal will bear. Trash, lumber, sad stuff, are the titles you give to my favorite amusement. If I called a white staff a stick of wood, a gold key gilded brass, and the ensigns of illustrious orders, coloured strings, this may be philosophically true, but would be very ill received. We have all our playthings: happy are they that can be contented with those they can obtain: those hours are spent in the wisest manner, that can easiest shade the ills of life, and are the least productive of ill consequences. I think my time better employed in reading the adventures of imaginary people, than the Duchess of Marlborough, who passed the latter years of her life in paddling with her will, and contriving schemes of plaguing some, and extracting praise from others, to no purpose; eternally disappointed, and eternally fretting. The active scenes are over at my age. I indulge, with all the art I can, my taste for reading. If I would confine it to valuable books, they are almost as rare as valuable men. I must be content with what I can find. As I approach a second childhood, I endeavour to enter into the pleasures of it. Your youngest son is, perhaps, at this very moment riding on a poker, with great delight, not at all regretting that it is not a gold one, and much less wishing it an Arabian horse, which he could not know how to manage. I am reading an idle tale, not expecting wit or truth in it, and am very glad it is not metaphysics to puzzle my judgement, or history to mislead my opinion. He fortifies his health by exercise; I calm my cares by oblivion. The methods may appear low to busy people; but, if he improves his strength, and I forget my infirmities, we both attain very desirable ends."

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* Lady Louisa Stuart.

At length Lady Mary quitted her solitude at Louvere, and for three years lived entirely at Venice, till the death of Mr. Wortley, in 1761. At the solicitation of her daughter, she then resolved to return to England; but the amiable Lady Bute had not long the satisfaction of seeing the mother whom she had lost for so many years, for she declined from the time of her arrival, and died the year following.

Her life is, in many parts, inexplicable; full of affection and kindness, of anxiety and interest for those belonging to her, she yet could quit them and her country for more than twenty years, and content herself with mere correspondence, without ever allowing herself the pleasure of beholding her nearest connexions: for it does not appear that either Mr. Wortley or Lady Bute visited her on the continent at any time. The painful state of her health may account for a long absence, but can scarcely explain her continuing it for so very protracted a period.

All that can be judged is that, finding their tempers altogether uncongenial, her husband and herself agreed to live apart; and, from habit, both became so accustomed to separation, that years lingered on without their attempting any renewal of their former manner of living. They were good friends apart; and her daughter being always occupied with the cares of a large family, she had less reason to call her back to England, and preferred remaining in a climate which suited her. It is to be regretted that she made a match so unsuitable to her; for had she fortunately married a man of a different character from the cold, harsh, severe person, for whom she gave up all her early brilliant prospects, no doubt she would have been as valuable in domestic life, as she was admirable in literary attainments, and fascinating in the qualities which delight the world.

END OF VOL. IV.

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